

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/25/0393	Case Officer:	Stefan Galyas
Application Type:	Full Application		
Proposal:	Change of use of the existing vacant social club (Use Class F2) to co-working studios (Use Class E), with a first floor extension proposed above the existing ground floor addition to the front of the building, together with the installation of new windows, roof lights, solar panels and heat pumps and a bin and cycle store		
Site:	The Royal British Legion, Woodsland Road, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 8HE, , ,		
Validation Date	21 Feb 2025	Overall Expiry Date:	19 Mar 2025
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Permission	Recommendation Date:	15 Apr 2025
Target Date:	18 Apr 2025	Recommending Officer Signature:	<i>Stefan Galyas</i>

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	1
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Signed and Agreed By:	<i>Stephen Ashdown</i>	Date:	17 Apr 2025
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/25/0393

**The Royal British Legion, Woodsland Road, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 8HE, ,
Change of use of the existing vacant social club (Use Class F2) to co-working studios (Use Class E), with a first floor extension proposed above the existing ground floor addition to the front of the building, together with the installation of new windows, roof lights, solar panels and heat pumps and a bin and cycle store
Mr Bayley**

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

There was one letter of representation received in response to the proposed development which sought to object towards the proposed development for the following reasons:

- The proposed first floor extension would have an overbearing impact towards the neighbouring residential dwelling. It was noted that there is an existing side elevation window facing towards the proposal.
- In relation to the character and appearance of the area, the proposal was not considered to be in keeping.
- There being a pre-existing parking issues in the locality which would be further exacerbated by the proposed development. It was commented that there would be restrictions on where the cars would be able to park which would result in neighbouring driveways being blocked.
- The proposed bin store being kept away from the neighbouring dwelling.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES

West Sussex County Council Highways:

No alterations are proposed to the existing vehicular access point on Woodsland Road. Considering the existing and proposed uses, the LHA does not anticipate that the proposals would give rise to a significant material intensification of use of the existing access point.

A revised off-street parking area is proposed, comprising of three car parking bays and one disabled car parking bay. From inspection of the plans, the proposed parking layout appears acceptable, and on-site turning appears achievable.

The LHA acknowledge the shortfall in car parking provision under WSCC Parking Standards, which for Class E office use would require 14 car parking spaces. However, it is worth noting that the existing F2 use would require 24 car parking spaces under WSCC Parking Standards, a higher shortfall than that of the proposed use. The LHA are unaware of any safety/capacity issues in the area linked to this existing site, and the proposed development represents a lower parking demand than the existing use. In addition, weight is afforded to the sustainable site location, being close to Hassocks Railway Station and regular bus connections from Keymer Road. Provision for parking of 18 bicycles has been demonstrated in the plans, which will help promote the use of sustainable transport methods. As such, no concerns are raised in this regard.

In summary, the LHA does not consider that this proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network, therefore is not contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 116), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.

Environmental Protection:

The proposal is to change use of the social club to co-working studios. The application is supported by a noise impact assessment report by Blackbird Acoustics on which these comments are based.

The applicant's consultant has carried out noise monitoring and has determined the likely noise impact from plant on the nearest residential properties. There is some uncertainty at the time of the report's completion over the precise specification of the air source heat pumps, the specification for the mechanical ventilation system (supply and extract) and the selection of mountings for both. Whilst I accept the results and conclusions of the assessment, that the Council's noise criteria are generally met, as the plant is not certain at this point, I recommend that a condition is included in the decision notice to provide a scheme that ensures the measures in the report are implemented.

Street Naming and Numbering:

Please can you ensure that the street naming and numbering informative is added to any decision notice granting approval in respect of the planning applications listed below as these applications will require address allocation if approved.

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

Parish Council:

Recommend Approval. The applicant is advised that Government has committed to adopt a 'Future Buildings Standard' during 2021 which will change the Building Regulations requirements for alterations and extensions to homes to bring these alterations closer to that of a 'zero energy building'. This is supported by Policy 5 'Enabling Zero Carbon' of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan which states that proposals that modify existing buildings (including extensions) should seek to maximise the inclusion of energy-saving measures and renewable energy generation. Energy saving measures include floor, roof and wall insulation, and low u-value windows (which may need to be triple glazed). These requirements may require amendments to your design which could affect the drawings submitted for planning permission. The applicant may wish to note that alterations that are built to a Nearly Zero Energy standard, are unlikely to need further retrofitting to minimise the carbon emissions that the nation is required to reduce to zero by 2050. As retrofitting an existing home to be highly energy efficient is more complex than doing so for a new building, applicants may wish to look at the 'EnerPHit' standard that the Government is understood to be considering as the applicable 'Nearly Zero Energy' standard in this context, or at the Architypes published by the London Energy Transformation Initiative for u-values for your extension walls, windows etc. and for ventilation and overheating prevention standards to be achieved.

INTRODUCTION

The application seeks planning permission for the change of use of the existing social club (Class F2) to a co-working studio (Class E). As part of the development proposal a new principal elevation first floor extension would be added, new windows would be added throughout, rooflights, solar panels, heat pumps and a bin and cycle store.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

There is no recent history of any planning applications relating to the site.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The application relates to a former social club with an expanse of single storey flat roof to the principal (western) elevation and a two-storey pitched roof element to the rear (east). The application site is set to the eastern side of the highway and utilises a brick built front boundary wall with a tarmacked car parking area between the application building and the roadside. There are numerous detached residential dwellings fronting either side of the road from varying historic periods, featuring an eclectic mix of external materials.

With regard to policy constraints, the site is located within the built-up area for Hassocks.

APPLICATION DETAILS

The development proposal would change the use of the existing premises from an existing vacant social club (Class F2) to co-working studios (Class E).

Accompanying the change of use alteration, a new principal (western) elevation first floor extension with a double gabled pitched roof design. The proposed first floor extension would measure at approximately 14.3m in length, 8.5m in width, have an eaves height of 4m at the lowest point and a ridge height measuring at 7m. An array of solar panels would also be installed to both of the southern facing roof pitches whilst rooflights would face north to the first-floor extension.

The proposal would also include a bin store to the west of the site and a cycle store to the south of the site. Additionally, some further air source heat pumps would be added to the rear (east) elevation.

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.

Specifically, Section 70 (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 states:

'In dealing with such an application the authority shall have regard to:

- a) The provisions of the development plan, so far as material to application,*
- b) And local finance considerations, so far as material to the application, and*
- c) Any other material considerations.'*

Section 38(6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 provides:

'If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.'

The requirement to determine applications "in accordance with the plan" does not mean applications must comply with each and every policy but is to be approached on the basis of the plan taken as a whole. This reflects the fact, acknowledged by the Courts, that development plans can have broad statements of policy, many of which may be mutually irreconcilable so that in a particular case one must give way to another.

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.

Using this as the starting point the development plan for this part of Mid Sussex consists of the District Plan, Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) and the Hassocks 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:

DP1: Sustainable Economic Development

DP21: Transport

DP25: Community Facilities and Local Services

DP26: Character and Design
DP28: Accessibility
DP29: Noise, Air and Light Pollution
DP39: Sustainable Design and Construction

Site Allocations DPD

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

Relevant policies.

Neighbourhood Plan

Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan (Made July 2020)
Policy 5: Enabling Zero Carbon
Policy 9: Character and Design
Policy 12: Community Facilities

Other Material Considerations

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:

DPS1 - Climate Change
DPS2: Sustainable Design and Construction
DPH12 - Accessibility
DPS2 - Sustainable Design and Construction
DPN6 - Pollution
DPN7- Noise Impacts
DPN8 - Light Impacts and Dark Skies
DPB1 - Character and Design
DPT4 - Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure
DPE4 - Town and Village Centre Development

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) (December 2024)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 is a material consideration.
Paragraphs 2, 8, 11, 39, 48, 85, 110- 114, 131, 135 &139.

The NPPF sets out the government's policy in order to ensure that the planning system contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 sets out the three objectives to sustainable

development, such that the planning system needs to perform an economic objective, a social objective and an environmental objective.

Paragraph 12 of the NPPF states; *' The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision-making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not usually be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.'*

Paragraph 39 of the NPPF states; *' Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.'*

With specific reference to decision-taking paragraph 48 states that planning decisions must be taken in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

National Planning Policy Guidance

National Design Guide

Published in 2021, the National Design Guide illustrates how the government consider well-designed places that are beautiful, healthy, greener, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice.

Paragraph 134 of the NPPF sets out that this national document, along with the National Model Design Code, should be used to guide decisions on application in the absence of locally design guides or design codes.

ASSESSMENT

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

- Principle
- Impact on Character and Design
- Impact on Neighbouring Amenities
- Highways Impact
- Other Matters
- Biodiversity Net Gain

Principle

Policy DP25 of the District Plan relates to community facilities and advises that:

'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.'*

Policy 12 of the Neighbourhood Plan states that:

'Development proposals which result in the loss of community facilities will not be supported.'

Development proposals for the alteration and/or replacement of community facilities will be supported where:

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

Policy DP1 of the District Plan relates to sustainable economic development and seeks 'to promote a place which is attractive to a full range of businesses, and where local enterprise thrives, and to provide opportunities for people to live and work within their communities, reducing the need for commuting.' It also encourages 'high quality development of land and premises to meet the needs of 21st century businesses'.

The submitted Planning Statement notes that the existing premises has been vacant since early 2023 as the former use was no longer viable. As this former facility is no longer in use and has closed well before the submission of the current planning application, it is not considered to be necessary in this instance that an equivalent or enhanced community facility would need to be developed elsewhere. As such, the principle of development is considered to be acceptable in this regard and would not be contrary to the provisions of DP25 of the District Plan nor Policy 12 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Impact on Character and Design

DP26 of the 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 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'*

Policy 9 of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plans states that:

"Development proposals will be supported where they have regard to the Hassocks Townscape Appraisal, and where their character and design takes account of the following design principles as appropriate to the nature, scale and location of the particular proposal:

- o Is of high quality design and layout;*
- o Contributes positively to the private and public realm to create a sense of place;*
- o Respects the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape;*
- o Protects open spaces and gardens that contribute to the character of the area;*
- o Protects valued townscapes and the separate identity and character of Hassocks, Keymer and Clayton;*
- o Does not cause unacceptable harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings, including taking account of the impact on privacy, outlook, daylight, sunlight and security;*
- o Creates safe, accessible and well connected environments;*
- o Protects existing landscape features and contributes to the village's Green Infrastructure network;*

- o *Incorporates the use of local materials which are appropriate to the defined Local Townscape Character Area; and*
- o *Positively responds to the local vernacular character of the defined Local Townscape Character Area."*

Principle DG49 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide states:

'Extensions should typically use simple, uncomplicated building forms to compliment 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.'

DG44 of the Design Guide relates specifically towards the design of commercial buildings. It notes that:

Employment buildings should respond positively to the character and architectural traditions of the District in terms of scale, mass, form, materials and detailing (refer to the principles in chapter 6).

Within town centres offices must present a positive interface with the street with prominent entrances and design features to help to animate the street space. [...] New commercial buildings should reduce their impact upon the environment by incorporating the sustainability principles set out in DG37.

The design of commercial buildings must consider:

- o *Measures to create a more human scale for example through the vertical articulation / subdivision of the facade;*
- o *Careful selection of facing materials that blend with the surroundings and/or complement existing adjacent buildings.*
- o *The location of reception areas and office space so that it positively contributes to the surveillance of entrance areas and forecourts;*
- o *The location and coordination of signage to minimise its impact and ensure that signage on buildings is not overbearing on the surrounds or out of proportion with the scale of buildings; and*
- o *Measures to mitigate the impact of their height/bulk. For example, low profile pitches / barrel vault roofs may be preferable to angular flat roofs. Green roofs should be considered where appropriate.*

Additionally, Principle DG50 as set out within the Design Guide, relates to front extensions:

Front extensions are more likely to be acceptable where the building line is staggered or where the dwelling is set well back from the road. They are less likely to be acceptable in streets with a strong consistent building form as they risk disrupting the underlying order.

The proposed first floor extension would not increase the footprint further out towards the principal elevation and would simply extend upwards at first floor level. This would be the most visually prominent elevation with regard to the public domain and the use of the new double gabled design through the first floor extension is considered to materially alter the existing appearance of the building. It is considered that the former social clubs appearance was of limited architectural merit, utilising an expanse of flat roof with an awkward relationship to the pitched element to the rear. As such, modernising additions are not considered to be wholly unacceptable, subject to detail.

The proposed elevations would utilise brick and recycled PVC cladding to its exterior which are considered to give rise to a more contemporary appearance to the building. Further sample examples of the proposed PVC cladding have been provided by the Applicant which detail a patterned design throughout the elevation. Upon review, it is considered that the proposed materials would result in an acceptable appearance with regard to the character and appearance of the locality.

In terms of subservience towards the existing building, the proposed first floor extension would likely increase the existing buildings perceived bulk and scale significantly from the existing. The existing ridge two storey elements ridge height would be matched and the two roof pitches would not fully intersect.

Whilst this elements overall size and scale would be increased from the existing arrangement, it is considered that the overall appearance would be an improvement from the existing expanse of flat roof.

In view of the above, the proposal is considered to comply with Policy DP26 of the District Plan and Policy 9 of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenities

Policy 9 of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan states that proposals should not cause 'unacceptable harm' with regard to neighbouring amenity whereas policy DP26 of the MSDP states that development should not cause 'significant harm' to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings, including taking account of the impact on privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, and noise, air and light pollution. There is therefore some conflict between the District Plan and Neighbourhood Plan in this respect. 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 9 of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan is considered to take precedence and therefore the test in this instance is whether the development causes 'unacceptable harm' to neighbouring amenities as outlined above.

DP29 then relates to noise, air and light pollution:

The environment, including nationally designated environmental sites, nationally protected landscapes, areas of nature conservation or geological interest, wildlife habitats, and the quality of people's life will be protected from unacceptable levels of noise, light and air pollution by only permitting development where:

Noise pollution:

- o It is designed, located and controlled to minimise the impact of noise on health and quality of life, neighbouring properties and the surrounding area;*
- o If it is likely to generate significant levels of noise it incorporates appropriate noise attenuation measures;*

Noise sensitive development, such as residential, will not be permitted in close proximity to existing or proposed development generating high levels of noise unless adequate sound insulation measures, as supported by a noise assessment are incorporated within the development.

In appropriate circumstances, the applicant will be required to provide:

- o an assessment of the impact of noise generated by a proposed development; or*
- o an assessment of the effect of noise by an existing noise source upon a proposed development;*

Light pollution:

- o The impact on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation areas of artificial lighting proposals (including floodlighting) is minimised, in terms of intensity and number of fittings;*
- o The applicant can demonstrate good design including fittings to restrict emissions from proposed lighting schemes;*

Air Pollution:

- o It does not cause unacceptable levels of air pollution;*
 - o Development on land adjacent to an existing use which generates air pollution or odour would not cause any adverse effects on the proposed development or can be mitigated to reduce exposure to poor air quality to recognised and acceptable levels;*
 - o Development proposals (where appropriate) are consistent with Air Quality Management Plans.*
- The degree of the impact of noise and light pollution from new development or change of use is likely to be greater in rural locations, especially where it is in or close to specially designated areas and sites.*

The site is positioned adjacent to two residential properties, to the south is the neighbouring bungalow known as Cresta and to the north is a chalet style dwelling known as 2 Woodlands Road. At the neighbouring property known as Cresta to the south, there is an existing unobscured glazed side (north) elevation window which would face back out towards the proposed first floor extension. This window is set behind the application buildings principal elevation and set approximately 3.3m away.

In terms of light impact to the rear windows, Principle DG47 of the Design Guide states among other matters that all dwellings should benefit from daylight and sunlight levels that conform to BRE (Better Regulation Executive) standards. Further guidance is set out within the "Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A Guide to Good Practice" document. The "25 degree approach" should be taken whereby a 25 degree line is drawn from the centre of the lowest habitable room. If the neighbouring properties window lies beneath the 25 degrees as measured, then the building will not likely cause a significant reduction in light received to the concerned window. This guidance is taken as a rule of thumb and each planning application is assessed based on its own merits.

The proposal is designed in such a way that the eaves height of the roof pitch closest to the southern boundary and neighbouring window is the lowest along the entire elevation, measuring at approximately 4m high. When the 25 degree test is conducted from the middle of the neighbouring window at Cresta in elevational format, the proposed first floor extension southern roof slope would likely follow the 25 degree line with a smaller area of the ridge falling within this line. In any case, the neighbouring window affected is northwards facing and receives a reduced level of light due to its positioning on the existing elevation. It is considered that the proposal would not result in a significant overbearing impact as confirmed by the 25 degree test.

To the north of the site at No.2, there are a number of first floor unobscured glazed sash style windows which are sited forward of the application buildings principal elevation. These windows are southwards facing and positioned at first floor level and whilst some loss of light may be experienced during the morning hours when compared to the existing arrangement, it is considered that by virtue of the dwellings siting that ample light would still be received.

The existing buildings-built form at first floor level would be increased towards the shared northern boundary and therefore the neighbouring garden at No.2. An area of flat roofed single storey would remain towards this shared boundary and an offset of approximately 2.8m would remain between the proposed first floor extension and the neighbouring garden. It is considered that this offset would help alleviate against a significant overbearing impact towards the neighbouring garden amenity space.

Several rooflights would be installed to the buildings eastern roof pitch which would face out towards the adjacent flats at Holmwood Court. It is considered that these rooflights would be set at a high level and would be used to supply light into the office rooms rather than offering outlook. This assessment is also considered to be applicable towards the proposed northern facing rooflights to the proposed first floor extension which are also considered to be set at a high level. The proposed windows at ground floor level are considered to mirror the existing to the eastern elevation and would likely be obscured in their views towards the neighbouring site by the existing boundary treatment. As for the proposed ground floor southern windows, these would likely look out towards the proposed cycle store area and the existing timber boundary fence would help obscure views towards the neighbouring site. The proposed first floor southern elevation window would likely offer views out towards the adjacent neighbouring garden at Cresta. Given the first-floor positioning of the window, a condition ensuring this remain obscure glazed in perpetuity is considered relevant and necessary in the instance that planning permission is granted.

An array of southern facing solar panels would be set to the southern roof pitches on the first-floor extension. Provided that the adjacent neighbouring property at Cresta is a bungalow, it is considered that the proposed rooflights would not face out towards the adjacent neighbouring windows and result in a glint and glare impact. As such, the proposal is considered to result in an acceptable impact in this regard.

Air source heat pumps (ASHP) would be sited to the rear of the building nearby the shared boundary with Holmwood Court to the east. A noise impact assessment was carried out and submitted as part of the current application and it was noted that there is some uncertainty over the ASHP specifications. As such, it was recommended by the Environmental Protection Officer that a scheme to protect the nearby

neighbouring residents from an adverse noise impact is submitted prior to commencement which was agreed by the Applicant.

Accordingly, the proposal is considered to comply with the provisions of DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan in terms of neighbouring amenities.

Highways Impact

Paragraph 116 of the NPPF states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe. Additionally, Policy DP21 of the District Plan requires development proposals to protect the safety of road users and pedestrians.

The proposed development includes a revised off-street parking area, including three car parking bays and one disabled parking bay. It was commented by the Highways Engineer in response to the proposed development that the layout appears to be acceptable in this regard and that there was sufficient space for on site turning. The West Sussex County Council parking standards would require 14 parking spaces for a Class E office use, however it was noted that there is an existing shortfall on site. The existing use would require 24 parking spaces which is a greater shortfall than what is proposed.

It was also commented that great weight is afforded towards the sustainable location of the proposal which is nearby the railway station for Hassocks and served by bus connections. Furthermore, there were no further records of safety or capacity issues relating to the existing site. Accordingly, the proposal was not considered to result in an unacceptable impact upon the highways network.

Other Matters

Policy 5 of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan, among other matters, requires domestic extensions to maximise the inclusion of energy-saving measures and renewable energy generation. The proposal would incorporate several low-energy measures as part of the development proposal, including south facing solar panels and ASPHs. The proposed building would also make use of passive design measures such as natural ventilation and a dual aspect design, further utilising energy saving measures.

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 is comprises development below the de-minimis threshold meaning that this development is exempt from providing 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 Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan.

Courts have confirmed that the Development Plan must be considered as a whole, not simply in relation to any one individual policy. It is therefore not the case that a proposal must accord with each and every policy within the Development Plan.

The proposed alterations are considered acceptable in terms of exterior design within the surrounding context and the amenities of the neighbouring occupiers. The proposal therefore accords with Policies DP1, DP21, DP25, DP26, DP28, DP29 and DP39 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, Policies 5, 9 and 12 of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan and the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Stefan Galyas