

Your Ref: **PP-14671890**
Our Ref: HPD/CD/CM/25/165
Date: 06 March 2026

Mid Sussex District Council
Oaklands
Oaklands Road
Haywards Heath
West Sussex
RH16 1SS



Hybrid Planning & Development Limited
Studio 11
6-8 Cole Street
London
SE1 4YH

www.hpduk.com

+44 (0)20 3633 1678
+44 (0)7814 560 543
cmills@hpduk.com

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: UNIT 22 BRIDGE ROAD, HAYWARDS HEATH, RH16 1UA

On behalf of our client Screwfix Direct Limited, we are instructed to submit an application under Section 73 of the Town & Country Planning Act (1990) to vary Condition no. 4 of planning permission LPA ref: HH/246/99 dated 22 October 1999, as it relates to Unit 22 Bridge Road in Haywards Heath.

Please find attached the following documentation which, in addition to this letter, comprises the planning application:

- Duly completed Planning Application Form;
- Completed Certificate B and Copy of Notice as Served;
- Site Location Plan (at scale 1:1,250), with the site edged in red;
- Copy of Decision Notice LPA ref: HH/246/99 dated 22 October 1999; and
- Proposed Floor Plan (Dwg no. DR-I-0027-GA-P3).

The statutory application fee of £586.00 has been paid electronically by card following submission of this application via the Planning Portal.

The proceeding sections of this letter outline the planning history for the site, the proposal and its compliance with national and local planning policy.

PLANNING HISTORY

We are aware of the following planning history for the site:

- LPA ref: HH/192/89 - Internal alterations and elevational changes to existing buildings to part of Jacobs Young and Westbury Site. Approved 15 September 1989.
- LPA ref: HH/122/89 - The change of use of existing warehouse building B8 To B1 use (Business Units) including the demolition of certain outbuildings to allow improved car parking servicing. Approved 14 November 1989.
- LPA ref: HH/246/99 - Change of use from printers to ceramic tile distributor, including part B1 use, part storage and part retail. Approved 22 October 1999.

There is no later planning history in relation to the site. In light of the above, we understand the lawful use for the premises is for Class B8 (Storage or Distribution) purposes.

SITE CONTEXT

The premises comprises a fairly typical mid terrace industrial unit with related external space located on Bridge Road.

The site is surrounded by a mix of commercial and industrial buildings, and residential properties.

THE PROPOSAL

As set out above, this application seeks to vary Condition no. 4 of planning permission LPA ref: HH/246/99 dated 22 October 1999, as it relates to Unit 22 Bridge Road in Haywards Heath.

Condition no. 4 of the permission states:

“No part of the premises shall be used for the purpose of retail or display to Members of the public, other than that identified as ‘retail floorspace - 80 square metres’ on the application floorplan dated 7 October 1999”.

The reason given for the imposition of the condition is:

“To ensure that retail activity does not become the predominant use of the premises, in conflict with policy HH4/3 of the adopted Haywards Heath Local Plan.”

Notwithstanding, Screwfix Direct Limited who are the prospective occupiers of Unit 22 Bridge Road wish to vary this condition due to the proposed location of their ancillary trade counter.

Accordingly, we propose that Condition no. 4 be varied as follows:

“No part of the premises shall be used for the purpose of retail or display to Members of the public, other than that identified as the trade counter on Proposed Floor Plan (Dwg no. DR-I-0021-GA-P3) dated 29 January 2026.”

SCREWFIX DIRECT LIMITED

Screwfix Direct Limited comprises a trade counter operation aimed at local builders and related services e.g. plumbers, electricians, facilities departments to large organizations such as offices, hospitals, hotels, schools and prisons. Their products are also sold over the internet, via a catalogue, over the telephone as well as over the trade counter, which typically occupies about 10% of the floor space of a unit, with any individual unit servicing its own local area for each of these methods of purchase. Screwfix brands and products are formulated for the trade professional in terms of quantity and type of goods. Whilst the units are advertised, this is predominantly in the trade press and is directed at tradesmen.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

The variation of this condition would in effect allow Unit 22 Bridge Road, Haywards Heath, to be occupied by Screwfix for unrestricted storage or distribution (Class B8) purposes, in accordance with planning permission (LPA ref: HH/246/99).

Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as Amended)

Current national guidance on Class B8 uses is contained in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended). It confirms that this class is defined by the character of the use of the land, not the appearance or description of a building.

Accordingly, for a use to qualify under Class B8, storage or distribution must be the primary function of the land.

Circular 11/95: Use of Conditions in Planning Permission

Whilst Circular 11/95 has now been cancelled as a statement of ministerial policy, it remains a general statement of law, which continues to be applicable.

Circular 11/95 deals with the 'Use of Conditions in Planning Permission'. It confirms that the Use Classes Order is designed to give a freedom from detailed control and that conditions should not be imposed which would restrict changes of use that are not regarded as "development" (whether because the change is not a "material" change within the terms of section 55(1) of the Act, or by reason of section 55(2) and the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987), save in exceptional circumstances.

It clearly states that *"the Secretaries of State would regard such conditions as unreasonable unless there were clear evidence that the uses excluded would have series adverse effects on amenity or the environment, that there were no other forms of control, and that the condition would serve a clear planning purpose"*. (Paragraph 87).

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in December 2024, aims to strengthen local decision making and to reinforce the importance of up to date plans.

Paragraph 11 states that:

"Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development."

For decision-taking this means (**Paragraph 11**):

"Approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay".

Paragraph 39 confirms that Local planning authorities should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area and that decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

Paragraph 85 of the Framework provides clear support for businesses, stating that planning decisions should help create conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should also be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

Paragraph 87 continues that planning decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors, including making provision for storage and distribution operations at a variety of scales, and in suitably accessible locations.

The variation of Condition no. 4 as proposed would support the delivery of a new business and would therefore be in accordance with the NPPF guidance regarding the sustainable development needs of businesses.

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

The Local Development Framework for Mid Sussex District Council comprises the Mid Sussex District Plan (2018).

On the Policies Map accompanying the Mid Sussex District Plan (2018), the site falls within an Existing Employment Site which sits within a wider Major Employment Site.

PLANNING ANALYSIS

The variation of Condition no. 4 of planning permission (LPA ref: HH/246/99) would in effect provide greater flexibility in allowing Unit 22 Bridge Road, Haywards Heath to be occupied by the applicant.

Screwfix Direct Limited has a common operation throughout the UK in that they occupy B8 units for their primary use of the storage and distribution of goods with ancillary trade counters.

Indeed, the established planning principle of ancillary uses recognises that new activities may be started in a building or within its curtilage without any further need for permission provided that they remain ancillary to the main use.

It is by no means unusual for businesses involved in the distribution of goods to include a trade counter, where customers can call personally and buy what they need. The size of the trade counter will be small, both in itself and by comparison with the whole of the premises. In functional terms the trade counter will be entirely reliant on the primary storage and distribution use and could not operate as a separate and independent retail unit.

Furthermore, the principle of ancillary retail sales is already established by virtue of LPA ref: HH/246/99, and this application seeks to amend the approved plan to move the positioning of the trade counter to the front of the unit.

The purpose of the Screwfix operation at Bridge Road will be to serve the jobbing builder providing building materials which it would not be appropriate to stock in an industrial location.

As such, predominated by various employment uses, Bridge Road is the best location for such a distribution use to occur as it is of appropriate and sufficient size and provides appropriate parking/collection points for builder's vehicles.

The proposed number of vehicle movements to the site (including an average of three urban trailer movements per week) is entirely appropriate for a Class B8 use in a normal working day. The development will be served by 4 no. dedicated car parking spaces. Accordingly, the proposed variation of Condition 4 will not give rise to any unacceptable highways impact.

The proposed storage and distribution use is entirely appropriate to a settlement the size and function of Haywards Heath and will make use of the existing building, such that there will be no impact on the character of the area by reasons of scale or design.

In addition to the inherent sustainability benefits of occupying and bringing an existing building into productive use within a sustainable location, by virtue of the proposal, Screwfix Direct Limited will employ 10 members of staff on the premises, 3 of which will be full time employed. It will also help minimise commercial vehicle journey miles and congestion by providing building products in an easily accessible location.

Given the above, the proposal will provide benefits to the local economy whilst meeting sustainability objectives and will not be to the detriment of the environment or amenities of the area. The proposal is therefore in accordance with the most up to date guidance in the NPPF and the provisions of the Mid Sussex District Plan (2018).

CONCLUSION

In light of the above, we do not consider there to be any exceptional circumstances warranting the retention of the restrictive condition in its current form. Accordingly, we request the condition be varied to allow the new positioning of the trade counter to allow the premises to be occupied by the applicant.

We look forward to receiving your acknowledgement of receipt of this application and to its early favourable determination.

Should you have any questions arising from this submission please do not hesitate to contact me in the first instance.

Yours faithfully,



Charlotte Mills
SENIOR PLANNER

Encs.