

PLANNING STATEMENT

Application to Vary Condition 15 of Planning Permission DM/22/0921

Whittaker House, 1 Leppard Walk, East Grinstead, RH19 3BY

Local Planning Authority: Mid Sussex District Council

1. Introduction

This Planning Statement is submitted in support of an application under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to vary Condition 15 attached to planning permission DM/22/0921 at Whittaker House, 1 Leppard Walk, East Grinstead.

The proposed variation seeks to allow the re-arrangement of part of the internal ground floor, currently set out as unused storage, to form a new self-contained residential ground floor flat. The proposal involves internal alterations only, with no change to the building's external appearance.

2. Site Context and Surroundings

The site is located within the defined town centre of East Grinstead, as identified in the Mid Sussex District Plan. The surrounding area is characterised by a mix of residential, commercial, and service uses typical of a town centre environment.

The site benefits from a highly sustainable location, with excellent access to public transport, employment opportunities, retail facilities, healthcare, and community services, all within comfortable walking distance.

3. Relevant Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy

The proposal has been assessed against the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which places significant weight on:

- The effective use of land (Paragraphs 119–122);
- Optimising housing delivery, particularly within existing settlements (Paragraph 123);
- Promoting sustainable development and reducing reliance on private car travel.

Local Planning Policy – Mid Sussex District Plan (2018–2031)

The key relevant policies are as follows:

- **DP1 – Sustainable Economic Development**
- **DP3 – Town Centres and Retail**
- **DP4 – Housing**
- **DP5 – Housing Mix**
- **DP21 – Transport**
- **DP22 – Parking**
- **DP26 – Character and Design**
- **DP28 – Accessibility**

Each is addressed below.

4. Principle of Development

Policy DP1 (Sustainable Economic Development) and the NPPF's have shared objectives to optimise the use of land. The reuse of previously unused internal storage space represents an efficient and sustainable form of development, aligning with both Policy DP1 and the NPPF

Policy DP3 (Town Centres and Retail) explicitly encourages a mix of uses within town centres, including residential uses, where they support vitality, viability, and sustainable patterns of development. The proposal is entirely consistent with this policy, reinforcing residential presence within East Grinstead town centre.

Policy DP4 (Housing) supports residential development within built-up areas where it contributes positively to housing supply and makes efficient use of land. The proposal introduces an additional residential unit within an existing building envelope and therefore fully accords with this objective.

5. Housing Mix and Quality

Policy DP5 (Housing Mix) seeks to ensure that new residential development contributes to a balanced housing stock. While modest in scale, the proposed additional flat provides a smaller unit suitable for town centre living, contributing positively to local housing choice.

The accommodation would be self-contained, designed to meet relevant internal space and amenity standards, and is appropriate for its central location.

6. Transport, Parking, and Accessibility

Policy DP21 (Transport) promotes development in locations that reduce the need to travel by private car and encourage walking, cycling, and public transport use. The site's town centre location directly aligns with this policy objective. The proposal does not include an on site parking space but there is an option for a parking permit to be secured in the adjacent public car park should parking be needed.

Policy DP22 (Parking) allows for flexibility in parking provision, particularly in sustainable locations with good access to alternative modes of transport. The absence of on-site parking is considered acceptable given:

- Proximity to East Grinstead railway station;
- Access to frequent bus services;
- Immediate access to town centre amenities;
- Established pedestrian infrastructure.

7. Character and Design

Policy DP26 (Character and Design) requires development to respect the character of its surroundings and maintain high-quality design standards.

The proposal involves no external alterations to the building and no changes to its appearance within the street scene. As such, the character and visual amenity of the building and surrounding townscape would remain entirely unaffected, and the proposal is fully compliant with Policy DP26.

Policy DP28 (Accessibility) supports development that provides convenient access to services and facilities. The proposal fully complies with this policy, as future occupiers would have excellent accessibility to daily needs without reliance on a private vehicle.

8. Residential Amenity

The proposal would not give rise to any unacceptable impacts on neighbouring residential amenity. The flat would be wholly contained within the existing building envelope, with no additional overlooking, noise, or disturbance beyond that already associated with the lawful residential use of the building.

Future occupiers would benefit from a highly accessible location with appropriate living conditions for a town centre flat.

9. Planning Balance and Conclusion

The proposed variation of Condition 15 to allow the formation of a new ground floor flat at Whittaker House is fully consistent with the objectives of the Mid Sussex District Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

In summary, the proposal:

- Delivers an additional residential unit in a sustainable town centre location;
- Provides one new dwelling to help meet the central government target;
- Makes efficient use of previously under-utilised internal floorspace;
- Preserves the character and appearance of the building;
- Is acceptable without on-site parking given the site's accessibility;
- Causes no harm to residential amenity or highway safety.

For these reasons, it is concluded that the proposal represents a sustainable, policy-compliant form of development, and the application to vary Condition 15 of planning permission DM/22/0921 should be granted.