

CHICHESTER HARBOUR
AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY
PLANNING ASSESSMENT REPORT

CHC AONB Unit Report: Fully Delegated Decision Process

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2A Tower Street, Emsworth, Hampshire

Planning Application: **APP/20/00483**

(Listed Building)

Proposal for Change of Use of first and second floors from residential dwelling (Use Class C3) to business use (Use Class A2) together with installation of outdoor clock over entrance door to ground floor office 51 High Street

Chichester Harbour AONB Unit Recommendation – No objection

Suggested considerations –

- schedule/samples of materials to be agreed prior to construction / as indicated on application forms / to match the existing on site.

Planning Approach

The statutory purpose of the AONB is to conserve and enhance the area's natural beauty. The LPA should assess the application carefully as to whether the proposed development would have a significant impact on or harm that statutory purpose. Relevant to this is the duty on public bodies to 'have regard' for that statutory purpose in carrying out their functions (Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000). The Planning Practice Guidance confirms that this duty also applies to proposals outside the designated area but impacting on its natural beauty.

Chichester Harbour Conservancy, administer and safeguard the Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The aim of conserving and enhancing the areas natural beauty requires the Conservancy to consider the proposal on its landscape character aspects. Landscape covers both urban environments as well as countryside and coastal areas.

- Landscape Character

The Chichester Harbour AONB Landscape Character Assessment (CBA update 2019) prepared for the Conservancy, identifies 10 Landscape Character Types - areas of broad tracts of land with common landform, and 19 specific Landscape Character Areas - unique areas with a recognisable pattern of landscape characteristics that combine to create a distinct sense of place, and which represent discrete geographical areas of a particular landscape character type.

The Landscape Character Areas define relevant key characteristics, ecological features, important views across land and water areas, historical features, settlement character, as well as key issues to landscape condition and landscape sensitivity, together with a landscape strategy to be followed. The summary and recommendations lay out the special qualities of Chichester Harbour AONB.

- Management Plan

The Chichester Harbour AONB Management Plan (2019-2024 - Third Review April 2019) identifies 10 special qualities (page 10) that represent the exceptional features that contribute to the AONB designation. On this basis the Chichester Harbour Management Plan provides an integrated coastal zone management strategy for the Trust Port and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Relevant policies would include, Policy 1 (Conserving and Enhancing the landscape), Policy 2 (Development Management), and Policy 3 (Diversity of Habitats).



- Planning Principles

The Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Beauty Planning Principles (Management Plan version April 2019) provides guidance on development. These principles set a range of criteria to be addressed to warrant a favourable consideration in terms of likely impact within and on the AONB. Planning Principle PP01: Chichester Harbour as a Protected Area, is applicable to this and all proposals within or affecting the AONB.

Planning Principles **PP01: Chichester Harbour as a Protected Area**, sets out the key overarching approach for the AONB, in that the statutory primary purpose is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area. Great weight shall be given to the protection of the landscape, the conservation of nature, and the special qualities of Chichester Harbour and its surrounding supporting hinterland.

Planning Principle **PP06: Conversion of buildings inside and outside of defined settlements**, changes of use to an alternative activity require the consideration of certain criteria:-

- where applicable, the building is no longer required for its original purpose,
- the building is structurally sound,
- protected species and habitats are not harmed,
- an alternative employment use or tourism activity is first considered and proven to be unviable before residential use is sought,
- residential use should be restricted to occupation for those requiring a countryside location for employment or for affordable housing rural exception site use,
- design changes are sympathetic to the building and area character
- the ambient tranquillity of the area is maintained

Planning Principle **PP09: Dark Skies**, that are adjacent to or impact on areas of nature conservation will only be supported in exceptional circumstances

- Joint Chichester Harbour AONB SPD

The Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Beauty Joint Supplementary Planning Document (2017) requires that any development proposed in the AONB should be guided by to protect, conserve, and enhance natural beauty and wildlife (Section 2 overarching principles). The SPD is adopted by both Havant Borough Council and by Chichester District Council as part of their planning policy and development control approach.

The SPD provides detailed guidance on the level of acceptable development within the AONB. All development within the AONB should follow the guidance as closely as possible. Section 8 (page 17) requires that in designing new development, consideration of the setting of the development in the AONB landscape must be shown as to how the proposal would contribute to the character of the area. A Landscape Visual Impact Assessment may be necessary in sensitive areas of exposed wide landscape character.

The adopted guidance requires a clear demonstration that no harm is caused to the AONB.

Relevant Planning History

There is no recent or relevant planning history available for this upper floor site (2A Tower Street) on the LPA public access website, and those for the ground floor premises (51 High Street) relate to change of use That are not relevant to the current proposal.

Contextual Consideration

The site lies within the AONB. The site occupies a built-up location to the town centre part of Emsworth. The red-line application does not a boundary with a coastal frontage. The proposal would therefore have a visual impact the character of the AONB in this town locality. The site lies within the Emsworth Conservation Area. The building is indicated to be on the scheduled list of buildings of historic or architectural importance, as a Grade II structure. The site is

indicated as being within Flood Zone 1: Low Probability of flooding in the submitted Design and Access Statement.

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Location and Existing Development

The application site is located to the central area of Emsworth. The site is situated to the south corner of the junction between High Street (to the north) and Tower Street (to the west). The area is a mix-use location with retail, business and residential uses.

The ground floor is accessed from High Street and is used as a single office premises. The upper floors are access from Tower Street and provide a self-contained one-bedroom residential flat over two-floors with limited external outdoor space, a first floor rear, south facing, terrace accessed from the dining room.

Submitted Proposal and Supporting Documents

The application proposal is for the Change of Use of the upper floors to form office accommodation. The conversion works would be internal and fairly limited. There would be little external change to the building other than the installation of a clock over the doorway to the ground floor premises. The floor plans indicate that the ground floor and first floor would retain their separate entrances although an internal doorway would allow them to be linked if required.

It is noted that a Heritage Statement and a Design and Access Statement, including a Flood Risk Assessment, has been submitted in support of the proposal. The supporting documents have been considered alongside the planning application submission form and plans/drawings

Applicants Approach

The applicant/applicant's agent have referred to the application proposal within its context and setting of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in the submitted documents for the proposal.

There is however no recognition made to the AONB planning policy documents relevant to the consideration of the proposal (see above in Planning Approach section). Furthermore, the applicant/applicant's agent has failed to make any reference to, or to consider the LPA Local Plan Policy specifically addressing the AONB (HBC Local Plan Policy CS12).

The proposal has apparently therefore been made without acknowledgement of the status of the AONB and Management Plan, and without the expected due professional understanding, care or oversight that would be considered appropriate in this regard.

Planning Assessment

- Policy Considerations

The statutory purpose of the AONB is to conserve and enhance the area's natural beauty. The adopted guidance requires a clear demonstration that no harm is caused to the AONB.

In general planning terms, the principle of –

1. the proposed use and activity resulting from the development
2. the proposed physical works and finished treatment and appearance

would require a full and detailed consideration and assessment of potential, possible, and probable impact of both (1) the use and activity and (2) the physical works, to the character and appearance of the site and locality within the AONB.



The principle of the proposed use and activity would not be a significant concern due to the use being ancillary / complementary to the activity of the ground floor unit on the site, and the mixed-use character of the area. The principle of the proposed physical works and appearance should be generally acceptable to the character and appearance of the surrounding environment.

- Visual Impact within the AONB Landscape

Visually there would be only a limited change to the appearance of the property. The installation of a public clock to the High Street elevation would not be considered out of keeping with the mixed-use character of the setting.

- Visual Scale / Bulk Changes

The visual impact of the proposal within the AONB is also a factor of scale. In this proposal there is no external physical works to increase the floor area or accommodation that exists on the site. There are therefore no changes that would contribute to the bulk of the building.

- Visual Impact of Design and Appearance within the AONB

The scale must be assessed alongside the impact in building design and character. In this case, the proposal would be the retention of the existing building envelope with limited change to the general appearance, brought about by the installation of the public clock face above the door to the ground floor unit.

- Wildlife and Biodiversity

The proposal seeks a Change of Use of the exiting building floor space and structure. The proposal would therefore be unlikely to increase recreational activity in the locality or add to disturbance of wildlife areas. The proposal would involve no alteration to the buildings existing external structure. The proposal would not obviously impact on existing wildlife habitats and would not therefore be viewed as harmful to the wildlife or biodiversity of the site.

- Possible Alternative Use

The proposal which provides for a self-contained office accommodation which could be used with the existing ground floor office area.

- Summary Conclusion

The proposal would have a localised impact on the character and appearance of the building and the immediate surrounds. The proposal would have a visual impact on the AONB, but this is minimal.

Given its setting, the proposal is considered not to be unduly prominent to be detrimental to the character or the appearance of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

The proposal is unlikely to have any significant impact or effect on the AONB in terms of landscape character or in relation to wildlife conservation and protection.

Other Comment

The planning application will be considered by the LPA in terms of other aspects applicable to the planning merits of the proposal, such as any overlooking impact to neighbouring property and gardens, any perceived loss of privacy, any equated loss of light and cause of shadowing, noise generation and disturbance, traffic generation and on-site parking provision, and in terms of overall good building design and land-use neighbourliness.

Chichester Harbour Conservancy

A copy of this planning assessment report is attached to the consultation comment response to the LPA for information and for open transparency public view.

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Site viewed 14-07-2020 LPA request reply 16 July 2020 Comment to LPA 14 July 2020

LPA Planning Case Officer: Lesley Wells

Chichester Harbour AONB: David Rothery – Principal Planning Officer

This comment and recommendation is made having regard to the Policy framework:

- Chichester Harbour AONB **Landscape Character Assessment** (CBA update 2019)
- Chichester Harbour **Management Plan** (2019-2024)
- Chichester Harbour **AONB Planning Principles** (adopted 17.10.16 and Management Plan version April 2019)
- Chichester Harbour **AONB Joint Supplementary Planning Document** SPD (2017)
- National Planning Policy Framework (Revised 2018)
- National Planning Practice Guidance (2014)
- Havant Borough Local Plan (2011/2014)
- Havant Borough Design Guide (2011)
- Emsworth Conservation Area CACA & Management Plan
- Emsworth Design Statement
- Draft Emsworth Neighbourhood Plan (2018)

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