



CHICHESTER HARBOUR CONSERVANCY

Planning
Havant Borough Council
Public Service Plaza
Civic Centre Road
Havant
Hampshire
PO9 2AX

23 March 2022

To the planning case officer: Tina Pickup
AONB national landscape consultation recommendation.

Location: **North Street House, 6 North Street, Emsworth PO10 7DD**

Planning Application: **APP/22/00029**

Proposal: Works to convert the doctor's surgery (E) to offices (E) plus the erection of a two storey building comprising a commercial unit (E) following the demolition of the existing single storey extension. With associated parking and hard and soft landscaping, including provision of one additional parking space.

Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) recommendation: **no objection, subject to:-**

- Implementation of the submitted landscaping scheme including the 'Green Wall' and the planting of a minimum of two native trees in the green area in the north-eastern corner of the site (to compensate for the loss of the Goat Willow tree and to enhance biodiversity on the site in accordance with the recommendations of the County Ecologist);
- Bat surveys to be updated and resulting mitigation implemented, and a suitable condition included to ensure the provision of bird boxes as recommended by the County Ecologist;
- Suitable conditions to require agreement of details of materials and finishes, including shop front and new first floor windows facing onto the street.

Thank you for consulting The Chichester Harbour Conservancy concerning the above planning submission.

CHICHESTER HARBOUR CONSERVANCY

The Conservancy was established by the Chichester Harbour Conservancy Act of 1971 with responsibility for navigation and the conservation of nature. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act of 2000 formally established the Conservancy as the Joint Advisory Committee for the AONB, with the purpose to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape.

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 AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)

The landscape of Chichester Harbour was recognised as nationally important when it was designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1964, through the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949. The statutory purpose of the AONB is to conserve and enhance the area's natural beauty.

Proposals impacting on the AONB are subject to more stringent planning guidance to ensure that development respects and enhances the inherent qualities of such a sensitive location. Proposed development must be assessed carefully to consider if it would have a significant impact on or harm that statutory purpose.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT SCOPE

Adopted guidance requires a clear demonstration that no harm is caused to the AONB. The AONB is not just applicable to the harbour waters and immediate coastline which gives the AONB its identifiable name, but includes large areas of inland rural countryside, small hamlet enclaves, built-up villages, and urban town areas spreading out and around the harbour area and further inland. The immediate supporting visual hinterland outside the AONB is also subject to consideration should it have a visual or other impact upon the AONB designated area (e.g., traffic impact reducing tranquillity), or its setting.

In its role in managing the Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), The Conservancy considers proposals against the Conservancy's planning guidance and principles - including The Chichester Harbour Management Plan (2019-2024), The Chichester Harbour Planning Principles (Management Plan version April 2019), The Chichester Harbour AONB Landscape Character Assessment (CBA update 2019), and The Chichester Harbour AONB Joint SPD (May 2017), adopted by both Chichester District Council and Havant Borough Council.

SUBMITTED PLANNING PROPOSAL AND RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

The current proposal site location lies inside the AONB and within the Emsworth Conservation Area. The status of the AONB within the statutory planning assessment regime needs to be fully assessed as a fundamental part of the comprehensive approach of the proposal.

The proposal is within the Emsworth settlement boundary.

The planning history for the site includes a recent approval APP/20/01115 for *Works to convert existing doctors surgery (E) to offices (E) plus erection of a two storey building comprising a retail unit at ground floor and one residential dwelling (C3) following demolition of existing single storey extension. Associated parking and hard and soft landscaping.* The Conservancy raised no objection to this application subject to suitable mitigation for recreational disturbance and nitrates increases, tree protection and landscaping scheme to be implemented, biodiversity enhancements to be implemented, and the agreement of facing and roofing materials.

The only significant difference from the approved scheme relates to the change of proposed use of the two-storey building from retail with a residential flat above, to commercial use (Class E) on both floors. As such, there is now no residential element within the proposals.

ASSESSMENT CONSULTATION CONCLUSION

AONB Planning Principles 01 (Chichester Harbour as a Protected Area) and 06 (Conversion of Buildings) and the Joint Chichester Harbour AONB SPD have helped to inform this AONB planning assessment.

The site is not exposed within the wider AONB Landscape but nevertheless forms a prominent corner site within the village setting of Emsworth and the Conservation Area. Officers are supportive of the change to a fully commercial (Class E) use of the new two-storey building in keeping with the village setting, and understand, as previously commented, that the Doctor's Surgery is re-locating to a site to the north where it can continue to serve the needs of the Emsworth and AONB community.

The proposed design, being very similar to the permitted scheme, is supported as, subject to suitable facing materials and shop front / window designs (traditional timber sliding sash windows would be encouraged to the first floor), it would enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and wider AONB.

We would reiterate the comments made by the County Ecologist regarding the need for an up-to-date Bat survey and suitable mitigation as a result of the findings, and to request suitable conditions to require the installation of bird boxes and that a minimum of two native trees are planted to compensate for the loss of the Goat Willow tree and to enhance biodiversity on the site, as well as ensuring protection of the trees to be retained during construction, in accordance with the Arboricultural Implications Assessment and Method Statement.

Overall, the proposals are considered to have little significant visual impact on the wider AONB nationally protected landscape and have the potential to enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and village setting within the AONB.

The Chichester Harbour Conservancy therefore raises **no objection** to the current submission, subject to suitable conditions as outlined above.

If you require any further clarification with regards to this recommendation, please contact the CHC AONB Planning Advisory Case Assessment Team.

Yours Sincerely,

Linda Park

Conservancy Principal Planner (Job-share Mon & Wed)
Chichester Harbour AONB Unit (Planning Team)
Chichester Harbour Conservancy

Chichester Harbour Conservancy manage and advise on the
Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
One of the UK's Nationally Protected Landscapes