HAVANT BOROUGH COUNCIL

Town & Country Planning Act 1990

Consultation on Planning Application

MEMORANDUM

From:	**Environmental Health**	**To:**	**Development Management**
Our Ref:	PR202605-111143	**Your Ref:**	APP/26/00274
EH Case Officer Extn:	44 6677	**Date:**	25 June 2026

DC Case Officer: Tim Furmidge
DC Case Officer Extn: -
Application Number: APP/26/00274
Site Address: 5-6 Highfield Parade, Waterlooville, PO7 7QH

Proposed Development: Application to determine whether Prior Approval is required for proposed Change of Use from Class E Commercial, business and service use to Class C3 Dwellinghouses (2 No. Flats)

Observations / Comments:

Comments here are made on the basis that the proposal falls within class MA, relating to MA.2(b) (Contamination) only. I am relying on my nuisance and amenity colleagues to comment on MA2. (d) & (f).

Contamination Risk

I note that the 'impacts and risks' section of the application form goes beyond the usual statement (typically indicating that the applicant is not aware of any potential contamination sources), making instead a logical argument that links contamination risks with groundworks. (*'The proposal is a change of use with no groundworks or excavations required, therefore, no risk of ground contamination'*). The logical basis for this statement is flawed – contamination risk for human health is related to landuse (exposure profile), and is independent of required groundworks.

This is relevant in this case as there are nearby potential contamination sources, and the proposal is for ground floor residential accommodation.

The unit at no. 3 was operated as a laundrette from around 1969 to at least 2007, with the original planning documents making reference to self-service dry cleaning machines and drum storage for chlorinated solvent cleaning fluids ('PERK' – referring to perchloroethylene, a dense and persistent volatile that is linked to adverse health impacts). The premises benefitted from an environmental permit for dry cleaning processes in to beyond 2007 (it is unclear when the business ceased and the permit lapsed); demonstrating a significant period of use.

Unit 3 is within 10&15m of the proposed development (respectively), and the local geology is likely to be made ground over cohesive clay – meaning that contaminants may persist at shallow depth, travelling with topographic or hydraulic gradients (at the made soil/clay boundary). Self-service dry cleaners operated <2000 are notorious for inefficiency and losses (poor practice, essentially), and the risk of losses is fairly high – one of the borough's most significantly contaminated sites was a laundry.

Inspection of historic planning documents does identify PERC as the only potentially significant contaminant – water heating was achieved by means of gas fired appliances, not oil. While the archives do indicate that various asbestos containing products were originally used within the building (and may remain) - I note that no private amenity space appears to be being proposed.

Regarding asbestos, I would draw a distinction between the possibility of asbestos being present within the building and that which might be present in/on/under the land. The former is not a material planning matter, and is instead controlled by a separate regime (Control of Asbestos Regulations) that (with ref to NPPF'24 para. 201) the LPA may assume will operate effectively to ensure that harmful materials within the building are removed, or clearly identified and safely retained to prevent release of fibres into the indoor air, or any exposure via inadvertent/accidental/unknowing physical disturbance during the residential tenure.

In terms of exposure risk, the proposed accommodation notably comprises 2 bed units. 2-bed units are not considered to not naturally deter modern small-family occupation, and so the most sensitive human receptor (child aged 0-6) may be expected to be reasonably present.

Residential landuse does have a different risk profile to commercial use, and notwithstanding that no development groundworks are proposed, it is relevant to the development (being a change of use which relates to both the buildings and associated land).

Chlorinated solvents associated with the laundry represent the greatest risk, and risk relevant to this development is likely to be closely linked to the depth to groundwater (within the general seasonal range), and the depth to which migrating solvent may reach – likely to be limited here by shallow cohesive deposits.

It is considered that residential development within 25m of credible sources such as these should be required to demonstrate either;

- That soil quality is suitable, and does not place occupants of the proposed development are not placed at unacceptable risk of harm, or;
- That the construction detailing is likely to mean that future occupants would not be placed at any unacceptable risk, if we assume a significant contamination source.

Realistically, the only exposure pathways material to this scheme are likely to be;

a) indoor inhalation of vapours from contaminants transported to the site from off-site sources (e.g. by groundwater movements & volatisation), and
b) penetration of potable water supply pipes by dissolved-, free-, or vapour- phase solvents; and subsequent ingestion of supplied water.

It is not expected that the applicant / developer be made responsible for cleaning up contamination originating from an off-site source, but it is appropriate for the applicant to ensure that the future occupants of the development are not placed at unacceptable risk as a result of contamination which originates from an off-site source, but materially affects the site.

The submitted detail does not include certain relevant particulars of the construction of the existing building, but it is likely given the high ground-floor loading requirements of commercial uses (like a laundry) that a ground-bearing slab is in place, and likely that masonry walls are of cavity-construction. These are factors that can increase the risk of vapour ingress.

Conclusions and recommendations

I would highlight the difficulty of retrofitting & verifying an effective hydrocarbon-vapour resistant barrier, and I am mindful of the need for planning decisions to be rational (not to impose conditions which, due to cost, undermine deliverability).

There are several examples in the borough of small developments such as this which are adjacent to potential contamination sources, and where retrofit risk mitigation measures are necessary. It is difficult to specify an adequate potential system given British Standards and accepted industry guidance. The specification of the floor construction forms part of the protection system, and retrofitted barriers usually need to be taken across the wall cavity – requiring intrusive construction work. The system may also have implications for the development FFL, and headers for existing openings, etc.

It is not recommended (therefore) to rely upon installing a gas barrier as a precaution which negates the need to quantify the need for the barrier (it is not a trivial thing to do).

With a quantum of just two units, mitigation costs could be prohibitive to potential yield (affecting viability).

With this in mind, I would that Prior consent is required and be refused in the absence of suitable documentation which demonstrates that the property is suitable for residential conversion (lack of material source, or viable & scoped scheme of mitigation).

For the benefit of the applicant, I would recommend that a competent consultant be approached to provide an assessment with narrow scope (because the potential risks are known/well-defined); and I would suggest that assessment include direct vapour monitoring from at least one shallow borehole (installed either within unit 5, or on land adjacent to it's East façade), comparing these results to a suitable vGAC (vapour generic assessment criteria, e.g. J&E Method, CIRIA C682) calculated for residential tenure using building dimensions which reflect the proposed residential units. This would be considered to be much more representative than PID screening of soil cores.

I would also recommend that the potable water supply pipe material is confirmed at the incoming cock and at the customer side of the meter – proven to be electrically continuous if metallic (i.e. metallic through whole length). If pipework is plastic, I would recommend that a water sample is collected from a faucet at each property (as close to the stopcock as possible), scheduled for analysis under a VOC suite that includes chlorinated solvents (it may need to be an extended suite). Standard 'wholesomeness' tests will not include the required parameters.

It is not considered necessary to undertake an environmental desk study to support the scope of works.

I would *not* recommended conditional approval, however this is ultimately a planning decision. Where Development Management is content with the rationality issue, and where the applicant understands the intended effect & consequence of the conditions, I would support a positive determination subject to the inclusion of the following conditions overleaf.

Contamination (Tailored – omitting EDS) [1]

> *Prior to the commencement of development hereby approved (other than any internal works pursuant to asbestos removal or for the purpose of ensuring structural stability), an assessment of the nature and extent of contamination at the site, whether originating from within or outside the curtilage, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The assessment shall be undertaken by competent persons, and the findings presented as a written report.*

The assessment may comprise separate reports as appropriate, but unless specifically excluded in writing by the Local Planning Authority, shall include;

1) *Site investigation appropriate to both the previous & approved commercial uses of the of the wider site, to provide sufficient data and information to adequately identify & characterise any physical contamination on or affecting the development land, and to inform an appropriate assessment of the risks to future occupants.*

2) *The results of an appropriate risk assessment based upon (1), and where unacceptable risks are identified, a Remediation Strategy that includes;*
   - *appropriately considered remedial objectives,*
   - *an appraisal of remedial &/or risk mitigation options, having due regard to both sustainability & viability, and;*
   - *clearly defined proposals for mitigation of the identified risks.*

3) *A verification plan providing details of the data that will be collected in order to demonstrate that the works set out any Remediation Strategy required under (2) are complete, identifying any requirements for longer-term monitoring of pollutant linkages, maintenance of engineered mitigation measures, and arrangements for contingency action.*

All elements shall be adhered to unless agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority

***Reason:** Contamination may be present at the site as a result of nearby land uses that could pose a risk to future occupants of the dwellings. This is in line with DM10 of the Havant Borough Local Plan (Core Strategy) 2011, DM17 of the Havant Borough Local Plan (Allocations) [2014], and paragraphs 196-197 of the National Planning Policy Framework '24."*

Verification Reporting (Tailored) [2]

*Prior to the occupation of the permitted development, any verification report required under **[Condition 1]** shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The report must;*

i) adequately demonstrate that works outlined in the scheme of contamination remediation or risk mitigation have been implemented,
ii) that the scheme is likely to achieve it's design criteria and will provide the expected degree of protection to the dwelling and it's future occupants, and
iii) provide EITHER a written statement confirming that no suspected contamination was identified during development, OR summary of actions taken under the contamination watching brief & discovery strategy demonstrating that the risk from suspected contaminated material has been appropriately managed.

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Mr. Jonathan Driver
Environmental Control Officer