

FAO Planning Department
Arun Civic Centre,
1 Maltravers Rd,
Littlehampton
BN17 5LF

26 September 2025 Dear Sir, Madam

Full Planning Application for the Change of Use from a Dog Grooming Parlour (Sui Generis) to Café (Use Class E(b)), installation of awning and outdoor seating at 123 Sea Road East Preston BN16 1NX.

This Planning Application has been submitted online via the Planning Portal under reference **PP-14347364** and includes the following documents/drawings:

- Planning Application and CIL Forms;
- Planning Covering Letter and Ecology Statement
- Suite of Architectural Drawings including Location and Block Plans.

The Site

The application site is located at 123 Sea Road, East Preston and currently comprises a single-storey commercial unit, most recently in use as a dog grooming parlour (sui generis). The building is of modest scale, featuring a tiled roof, with a combination of red brickwork and painted rendered elevations. The site extends to approximately 14 square metres in area.

The unit is currently vacant, and its redevelopment would therefore represent an efficient re-use of brownfield land within a sustainable and accessible location, making a positive contribution to both the local centre and the wider community.

The unit lies on the edge of a defined neighbourhood shopping area along Sea Road, which is characterised by a mix of small-scale commercial, retail and service use serving the local community. Surrounding uses include a public house, café, Indian and Chinese restaurants, a newsagent/convenience store, parish council offices, an estate agent, consulting rooms and a business suppliers' shop. Beyond the local centre, the wider surrounding area is predominantly residential in character, reflecting the settlement's role as a sustainable community hub.

The land itself is flat and level, with no trees of significance within or adjacent to the site that would be affected by development. The site is also located in Flood Zone 1 and has no surface water on site.

Planning History

A review of the Arun District Council online register reveals the following pertinent site history. The following provides a summary of the relevant planning history for the site.

EP/152/15/PL - Change of use from taxi office (sui generis) to dog grooming parlour (sui generis). Approved 7 January 2016.

EP/77/14/PL - Install radio mast. Change of use from florist (Class A1) back to taxi office (Sui Generis) at 123 Sea Road, East Preston. **Approved 23 July 2014.**

EP/17/05 - Change of use from taxi office to florist shop at 123 Sea Road, East Preston. **Approved 23 October 2005.**

EP/62/93 - Change of use from office to taxi hire office at 123 Sea Road, East Preston. Approved **22 October 1993.**

EP/73/92 - Change of use from office to taxi/hire office at 123 Sea Road, East Preston. **Approved 20 November 1992.**

EP/70/88 - Change of use from shop to office at 123 Sea Road, East Preston. **Approved 3 May 1988.**

The Proposal

The proposal seeks to change the use of the existing dog grooming parlour (Sui Generis) at 123 Sea Road, East Preston, to a café (Use Class E(b)). This change will not involve any alterations to the existing building's structure, ensuring that the building retains its current form and character. All existing doors and windows will be retained, preserving the building's original architectural features.

In addition to the change of use, the proposal includes the installation of an awning at the front of the unit. The awning will provide weather protection for the outdoor seating area, which will be positioned along the front of the café.



Figure 1- Existing and Proposed West Elevations (Front)

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All outdoor seating will be located on private land within the applicant's ownership, ensuring no impact on public areas. The seating will be modest (approximately 4no. tables which will be removed at the end of the day and stored indoors at night) which follows similar arrangements to the west of the site.

Further information about the proposal can be found in the accompanying drawings submitted with the application.

Planning Policy Overview

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was newly revised in December 2024 and is a material consideration in all planning applications.

The relevant sections of the NPPF relate to the presumption in favour of sustainable development, delivering a sufficient supply of homes, building a strong, competitive economy, ensuring the vitality of town centres, promoting sustainable transport, making effective use of land, achieving well-designed places, meeting the challenge of climate change, flood and coastal change and conserving and enhancing the historic environment. The relevant sections are not explored in detail within this letter but have been in the preparation of this application.

It is contended that the proposed scheme is entirely compliant with the relevant paragraphs of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Arun Local Plan (2018)

The Arun Local Pla 2018 sets out the strategic vision, objectives, policies and proposals for the development of the LPA to 2030 and beyond. The following policies in the Local Plan are considered relevant to this application but not explored in detail in this letter:

Policy SD SP1 – Sustainable Development

Policy SD SP2 – Built-up Area Boundary

Policy RET DM1 – Retail Development

Policy D SP1 – Design

Policy ENV DM5 – Development and Biodiversity

Policy QE SP1 – Quality of the Environment

Policy INF SP1 – Infrastructure Provision and Implementation

East Preston Neighbourhood Plan (2015)

The East Preston Neighbourhood Plan was made on 11 March 2015 and forms part of the Statutory Development Plan for this part of the District. The following policies are considered to be the most relevant policies in relation to the proposed development but are not explored in detail within this Statement:

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- **Policy 4: Design in Character Area Three**
- **Policy 10: Local Shops and Employment**
- **Policy 11: Community Facilities**
- **East Preston Village Design Statement SPD**

The application site falls within Character Area One of East Preston. Within the Village

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

The following Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) have been prepared by the LPA to provide additional advice and guidance on specific planning issues within the district. They are non-statutory documents but are a material consideration that the council will take into account when considering an application.

The following are considered relevant in the determination of the application but are not explored in detail within this Statement.

- Arun Design Guide SPD (December 2023)
- East Preston Village Design Statement SPD

Planning Appraisal

This section of the Statement details how the proposed development complies with the policies set out within the Development Plan. The following matters are the principal considerations with regards to the proposal:

Principle of Development

The application site at 123 Sea Road, East Preston was previously in use as a dog grooming parlour, which falls within a Sui Generis use class. The proposal seeks to change the lawful use of the premises to a café falling within Class E(b). The unit is currently vacant, and the proposed café use would enable the premises to be brought back into an active and beneficial use, providing a facility that has already attracted strong local interest.

The site is situated within the defined Built-Up Area Boundary, where the principle of development is supported. Policy SD SP2 of the Arun Local Plan directs new development towards sustainable locations within settlement boundaries, making efficient use of existing buildings and infrastructure. The re-use of this vacant unit fully accords with this strategy.

At a national level, the NPPF (December 2024) supports the effective re-use of previously developed land and vacant premises (see sections on making effective use of land) and encourages the provision of local services and facilities that meet community needs.

It is also important to note that the premises are of minimal size, which naturally limits the type of business that can viably operate from the building. In this context, a café use is entirely appropriate and acceptable, making efficient use of the space while delivering a community-focused facility.

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Accordingly, the principle of development is considered acceptable, being in full compliance with both the Arun Local Plan and the overarching aims of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Character and Design

The proposal does not involve any alterations to the existing structure of the building, thereby ensuring that the building retains its established form, scale and character. All existing doors and windows will remain unaltered, and the original architectural features of the premises will be preserved.

The only physical addition proposed is the installation of a modest awning at the front of the unit in which no signage or advertisement is proposed. This will provide weather protection for customers using the small outdoor seating area, which will be positioned immediately in front of the premises. The outdoor seating will be located entirely within land under the applicant's ownership, ensuring no impact upon the public highway. The proposed seating arrangement (4no. tables) reflects similar patterns already established to the west of the site and will integrate well with the existing street scene.

In terms of planning policy, the Arun Local Plan places emphasis on high-quality design. Policy D SP1 (Design) seeks development that contributes positively to its surroundings, while Policy D DM1 (Aspects of Form and Design Quality) requires proposals to respect local character and reinforce a sense of place. The proposal accords with these policies as it maintains the existing building's character, introduces no harmful alterations, and provides a modest enhancement in the form of an awning which will serve a practical function without detracting from the street scene.

Accordingly, the proposal is considered to have an acceptable impact on character and design, fully consistent with the requirements of the Arun Local Plan.

Residential and Visual Amenity

A small outdoor seating area is proposed to the front of the unit, contained entirely within land under the applicant's ownership. The scale of the space available limits the number of tables and chairs, ensuring that activity remains modest and appropriate for the location. All tables and chairs will be removed at the end of the working day and stored securely indoors at night. As such, any potential impact on neighbouring occupiers will be minimal.

Sea Road already accommodates a range of commercial premises, many of which operate with outdoor seating areas. The introduction of a similarly modest arrangement here would therefore be consistent with the established character of the street and would not introduce any unusual or uncharacteristic form of activity.

Given the limited capacity of the forecourt, together with the daytime nature of café activity, the proposal will not give rise to undue levels of noise or disturbance.

The Arun Local Plan requires development to protect amenity. Policy QE SP1 (Quality of the Environment) seeks to ensure that new uses do not have unacceptable impacts on health, wellbeing or living conditions. The proposal accords with this policy, as the outdoor seating will be small in scale, well integrated into the street scene, and typical of the established character of Sea Road.

Accordingly, the impact on residential amenity is considered acceptable.

Hours of Operation

The café is proposed to operate between **07:00 and 18:00, Monday to Sunday**. These hours reflect the typical daytime trading patterns of similar premises in the area and are considered appropriate for the location.

Restricting activity to daytime hours ensures that there will be no late-night noise or disturbance, thereby safeguarding the amenity of nearby residential occupiers. The operation of the café will therefore be compatible with the mixed commercial and residential character of Sea Road.

This approach is consistent with Policy QE SP1 (Quality of the Environment) of the Arun Local Plan, which seeks to ensure that development does not generate unacceptable impacts on health, wellbeing or amenity. By aligning opening times with established daytime activity in the locality, the proposal will maintain a balanced relationship between commercial vitality and residential amenity.

Accordingly, the proposed hours of operation are considered acceptable.

Transport and Parking

The existing site does not benefit from parking provisions, and it would be unfeasible to expect onsite parking provision at this site given its spatial constraints. The site is, however, within a highly sustainable location with the railway station and bus stops in walking distance, alongside the plethora of retail uses and services within the village centre. It is acknowledged that cycle parking is available directly opposite the site.

Despite not according with the Arun Parking Standards and thus also conflicting with Policy T SP1 in respect of the cycle parking. Any new business in this location would face the same issue, given the easy access to public cycle standards, it would weigh against the proposal significantly. As a result of compliance with policy in all other respects, overall, the proposal complies with Policy T SP1 of the ALP.

Sustainability

Policy ECC SP2 of the Arun Local Plan is relevant. It seeks proposals to achieve energy efficiency and incorporate renewable and low-carbon energy supply systems.

The proposal represents a sustainable form of development by reusing and repurposing an existing structure, thereby minimising the embodied carbon impact associated with the original building. Bringing the unit back into use avoids the need for demolition and redevelopment, ensuring that the embodied energy of the premises is retained and that material waste is avoided.

While no major fabric improvements are proposed, the applicant will incorporate energy-efficient lighting throughout the premises and install water-saving sanitaryware with flow restrictors to reduce water consumption. These measures will deliver operational sustainability benefits consistent with the Local Plan's aims, complementing the inherently sustainable approach of reusing the existing building.

Accordingly, the proposal represents a proportionate and appropriate response to sustainability objectives, fully in line with the scale and nature of the development.

Biodiversity Net Gain

The NPPF seeks to conserve and enhance the natural environment, and it is noted that biodiversity net gain has become a legal requirement from January 2024 for major redevelopment sites.

Given that there will be no external amendments, and the scheme purely seeks to change the use of the building, BNG will be exempt since it falls below the 25 square metre threshold.

Conclusion

In summary, the proposed change of use represents an efficient re-use of a small, currently vacant commercial unit within the Built-Up Area Boundary of East Preston. The café use is appropriate for the modest size of the premises and will deliver a small-scale business that will add to the variety and activity along Sea Road.

The scheme has been carefully considered to ensure it is fully compliant with the Arun Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024). It will preserve the character and appearance of the building, maintain the amenity of nearby residents, and operate within appropriate daytime hours. The modest awning and outdoor seating proposed are consistent with the established character of Sea Road and will not adversely impact the public realm.

Overall, the proposal represents a sustainable, proportionate and policy-compliant form of development, and we respectfully request that the application be supported by the Local Planning Authority.

Yours sincerely

Mr Lower

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