

PLANNING STATEMENT

Whitehorses, Clyde Road, Felpham, West Sussex. PO22 7AH.

Change of Use from Bed & Breakfast (C1) to Single Dwelling (C3)

1. Introduction

This statement supports an application for the change of use of the property from guesthouse/bed and breakfast accommodation (Use Class C1) to a single private dwelling (Use Class C3).

The property has operated as a bed and breakfast for approximately 25 years, serving visitors to the local area. However, due to a combination of personal circumstances and sustained changes in the tourism market, the continued operation of the business is no longer viable.

2. Planning Policy Context

The key policy consideration is Arun Local Plan Policy TOU DM1, which seeks to resist the loss of visitor accommodation unless it can be demonstrated that:

- The use is no longer economically viable; and/or
- There is no reasonable prospect of the site continuing in visitor accommodation use.

This statement addresses both criteria in detail below.

3. Personal Circumstances (Material Consideration)

The applicants' personal circumstances are a significant and material consideration:

- The applicant is 84 years old, with their spouse turning 80 in August.
- The applicant's wife has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's Dementia, resulting in increasing care needs.
- Continuity of environments is essential for dementia patients, therefore to move from the home they have lived in for over 25 years would be considered significantly harmful.
- Responsibility for running the business has fallen entirely to the applicant.

Operating a bed and breakfast requires sustained physical effort, long working hours, and daily guest interaction. The applicant has attempted to continue trading alone for approximately 24 months, but this has become increasingly difficult and is no longer sustainable.

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These circumstances significantly limit the realistic ability to continue the business.

4. Viability Assessment

4.1 Decline in Demand

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the business has experienced a sustained reduction in customer enquiries and bookings. This reflects broader changes in visitor behaviour and the local accommodation market.

4.2 Increased Competition

The viability of the business has been adversely affected by:

- The rapid growth of short-term letting platforms such as Airbnb, which offer flexible and often lower-cost alternatives.
- A noticeable concentration of such uses in the immediate area (e.g. multiple properties within Clyde Road now operating as short-term holiday lets).
- The opening of a new Premier Inn on the seafront, providing modern, purpose-built accommodation at competitive prices.

These factors have fundamentally altered the market, placing traditional small-scale B&B operations at a competitive disadvantage.

4.3 Financial Performance

As a result of declining demand and increased competition:

- Turnover has reduced significantly in recent years.
- Operating costs (utilities, maintenance, insurance, and compliance requirements) have continued to rise.
- The balance between income and expenditure has reached a point where continued operation is no longer financially sustainable.

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5. Marketing Evidence

The property was previously marketed for sale as a going concern when the business was performing well and demonstrating positive financial figures.

Despite this:

- No purchaser was secured.
- There was insufficient market interest to result in a sale.

Given that the property did not sell under favourable trading conditions, it is reasonable to conclude that:

- There is no realistic prospect of the property being sold as a viable visitor accommodation business in the current, more challenging market;
- The likelihood of a new operator taking on and successfully running the business is extremely low.

6. Compliance with Policy TOU DM1

This proposal complies with Arun Local Plan Policy TOU DM1 for the following reasons:

- Robust evidence demonstrates that the business is no longer viable.
- Marketing has shown there is no reasonable prospect of continued visitor accommodation use.
- Market conditions have shifted significantly, reducing demand for traditional B&B accommodation.
- Exceptional personal circumstances further justify the proposed change of use.

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7. Conclusion

The continued operation of the property as a bed and breakfast is no longer feasible due to:

- Sustained decline in demand and income;
- Increased competition from both short-term lets and budget hotels;
- Lack of market interest in the business as a going concern; and
- The applicants' age and significant health-related circumstances.

The proposal therefore represents a justified and policy-compliant change of use to a single dwelling.

In light of the above, planning permission is respectfully requested.