

Planning Statement

27 Clifton Road, Littlehampton, West Sussex, BN17 5TE

Applicant: Castle Accommodation Ltd

Proposal: Retention and extension of ground-floor Class C3 accommodation; associated ground-floor administrative and management office accommodation; and associated external alterations.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement supports the application by Castle Accommodation Ltd at 27 Clifton Road, Littlehampton ("the Site").
- 1.2 The proposal brings a long-underused ground-floor part of a previously developed site back into purposeful use. It retains and extends the ground-floor Class C3 accommodation and provides low-intensity, flexible administrative and management accommodation for the Applicant's business.
- 1.3 The Site lies within the defined settlement boundary. It is therefore a location where the development plan directs development in principle, subject to the proposal satisfying the relevant detailed policies.
- 1.4 The Site has an extensive planning history, including previous appeals. This application does not seek to reopen matters that are not necessary to determination of the present proposal. It instead provides a focused scheme for the completion and productive use of the ground floor.

2. The Site and Proposed Development

- 2.1 The proposal relates to the ground floor of 27 Clifton Road. It retains and extends the Class C3 accommodation and provides associated office accommodation, including meeting, reception, staff, sanitary, plant and storage facilities.
- 2.2 The ground-floor Class C3 unit would be extended. No additional bedroom is proposed and the extension would not increase the unit's occupancy.
- 2.3 The office element would accommodate Castle Accommodation's administrative and management functions. The Managing Director and support staff would use the offices flexibly and as required, and the meeting room would be used for directors' and other business meetings as necessary. The existing site manager would relocate from the small first-floor office to a ground-floor office and would be based there Monday to Friday. This is the re-provision of an established on-site management function, rather than the introduction of a new management use.

- 2.4 A room would be available for visiting support workers, housing officers and other service providers to meet residents privately. The existing accommodation has no dedicated facility of this kind. Its provision would directly benefit residents and the agencies that support them.

3. Planning Policy Context

Statutory starting point

- 3.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The relevant development plan includes the Arun Local Plan 2011–2031.

Arun Local Plan

- 3.2 Policy SD SP2 – Built-up Area Boundary provides the local policy context for directing development to the defined built-up areas. The Site is within the settlement boundary.

National Planning Policy Framework: August 2026

- 3.3 Since submission of the application, the National Planning Policy Framework: Plan-making and national decision-making policies (August 2026) has been introduced.
- 3.4 Policy S3(1)(a) directs decision-makers to apply Policy S4 to proposals within settlements. Policy S4(1) provides that development proposals within settlements should be approved unless the benefits would be substantially outweighed by adverse effects when assessed against the Framework’s national decision-making policies.
- 3.5 Policy L2(1) requires substantial weight to be given to the benefits where a proposal achieves one or more of the specified outcomes, including making better use of vacant and underutilised land and buildings, and creating additional homes or floorspace within settlements through sensitive redevelopment or additional development. Policy L3(1) requires development proposals to make efficient use of land, having regard to development needs, infrastructure, connectivity and the importance of well-designed, attractive and healthy places.

4. Planning Assessment

Principle of development: brownfield land within the settlement

- 4.1 The Site is previously developed land within the defined settlement boundary. This is a significant starting point. The proposal makes practical and productive use of existing buildings and land in a location where development is accepted in principle.
- 4.2 The proposal has two complementary elements:

- retention and extension of the ground-floor Class C3 accommodation; and
- flexible administrative and management accommodation for Castle Accommodation.

- 4.3 The scheme brings the underused ground floor of an existing building within a settlement into productive use, through retained and extended Class C3 accommodation and associated Class E(g)(i) office floorspace. The benefits of making better use of vacant and underutilised land and buildings, and of creating additional floorspace within settlements through sensitive additional development within an existing plot, attract substantial weight under Policies L2(1)(b) and L2(1)(d).
- 4.4 The ground floor has remained underused following the protracted planning and appeal history. The present scheme represents an opportunity to complete and bring the whole ground floor into active use.
- 4.5 The Site's location within the settlement means Policy S4(1) is the applicable national principle-of-development policy. The benefits of approval — including the effective reuse of an underused part of the Site, the additional floorspace and the business and resident-support functions — must be assessed against any adverse effects under the national decision-making policies.

Nature and intensity of the office use

- 4.6 The office accommodation is intended for Castle Accommodation's own administrative and management functions. The Managing Director and support staff would use the office space flexibly as required, while the meeting room would be used for directors' and other business meetings as necessary.
- 4.7 The site manager would relocate from the existing small first-floor office to a ground-floor office and would be based there Monday to Friday. This is a re-provision of an existing on-site management function, not the creation of a new management use or a material intensification arising from a new post.
- 4.8 A room would also be available to visiting support workers, housing officers and other service providers, enabling private meetings with residents. The existing accommodation has no dedicated room for that purpose. This is a direct resident-welfare benefit, improving the ability of residents to access the support services available to them.

Design, character and appearance

- 4.9 The proposal works predominantly within the existing developed footprint and seeks to make the ground floor usable through internal reconfiguration, the retained and extended Class C3 accommodation, and associated external works.
- 4.10 The external alterations are modest in scale and relate directly to the improved functioning, accessibility and natural lighting of the ground-floor accommodation. Following the findings of the Flood Risk Assessment, the internal finished-floor level

would be raised to an appropriate level. Consequently, the external windows and doors would also be raised.

Residential amenity and living conditions

- 4.11** The retained Class C3 unit includes living, sleeping, kitchen and bathroom accommodation – this improves the existing lawful situation. The office component includes separate meeting, staff, sanitary and support facilities.
- 4.12** The office use is of a limited and flexible operational intensity, save for the re-provided Monday–Friday site-manager role. The proposal would not create unacceptable noise, disturbance, overlooking or loss of privacy for neighbouring occupiers. Any operational detail that is necessary, relevant, precise and reasonable may be addressed by condition, should the Local Planning Authority consider this necessary.

5. Planning Balance and Conclusion

- 5.1** The proposal makes effective use of a brownfield site within the defined settlement boundary. It would retain and extend the Class C3 accommodation and provide flexible administrative and management facilities for Castle Accommodation.
- 5.2** The proposal is supported in principle by Policy S4(1), which applies to development within settlements. Substantial weight is to be given under Policy L2 to the benefits of making better use of vacant and underutilised land and buildings and, where applicable, creating additional floorspace within settlements through sensitive additional development within an existing plot. The proposal would bring a stalled and underused part of an established site into productive use, without any identified material harm to the character of the area or neighbouring living conditions.