

Application Number:	AWDM/0423/26
Location:	Gardeners Arms, West Street, Sompting, West Sussex
Proposal:	Change of use from Public House with flat over into full residential dwelling including relevant internal and external changes and loft conversion with dormer, half-gable end and roof windows.
Case Officer:	Peter Barnett

	Further Information Required
	Design Review Required
	No objection - no harm
	No objection - harm is negligible or mitigated
✓	Objection - less than substantial harm
	Objection - substantial harm
	Objection – Total Loss

Site and Surroundings:	The Gardeners Arms is a detached, two-storey former public house on the south side of West Street, within the Sompting Conservation Area. It is not listed, but is described in the application material as an attractive late nineteenth-century public house and, in built form, comprises a solid brick building with a rendered and painted first floor, shallow bay windows at ground floor level, traditional softwood-framed sash windows above, and a pitched slate roof. The building is set back slightly from the road, allowing a small informal frontage that has historically accommodated external seating, while the rear and side areas include a tarmac car park. The surrounding setting is defined by the linear historic village character of West Street, where development is generally close to the narrow highway and where intermittent footways, on-street parking, through traffic and tight townscape views are recognised characteristics of the southern part of the conservation area. The Sompting Conservation Area Appraisal identifies this part of the village as mixed in architectural quality but unified by its historic street pattern, traditional material palette, and especially the prevalence of flint boundary walls associated with former agricultural and market garden uses. West of the Gardeners Arms the southern side of West Street becomes looser and more rural in character, with characteristic flint walls and hedgerows enclosing views towards the fields of the tidal plain, while the wider conservation area retains significance as a historic rural settlement with medieval origins, a strong agricultural and horticultural history, and surviving eighteenth- and nineteenth-century buildings of merit.
Drawing	

Errors:	
Comments:	The site lies within the Sompting Conservation Area and the building, although not listed, is a visually prominent former public house on West Street which makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area through its age, scale, traditional form, frontage relationship with the street, and contribution to the historic village streetscape. Ordnance Survey mapping dates the public house to at least 1898 and, as a pre-1919 building retaining historic and townscape interest, it should be treated as a non-designated heritage asset. The relevant statutory duty is section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area. The application must also be assessed against section 16 of the NPPF, including the requirement to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, and against Adur Local Plan Policies 15, 16 and 17, which seek high quality design and development that preserves or enhances the historic environment. Moving on from the initial heritage context, it is acknowledged that the scheme has removed some elements previously identified as harmful. However, the proposal still includes large box dormers within the roofscape. These would be uncharacteristic additions within the Sompting Conservation Area and would be visible from the public realm. Their scale, form and bulk would introduce an overly muscular and top-heavy addition to the building, disrupting the traditional roof form and diminishing the aesthetic contribution the former public house currently makes to West Street and the wider conservation area. The Gardeners Arms derives part of its positive contribution from its established proportions, comparatively simple roofscape and traditional late nineteenth-century character. The proposed box dormers would appear as assertive and poorly integrated roof additions rather than subordinate alterations. In views from West Street and the surrounding public realm they would compete with, rather than respect, the existing building form. This would erode the character and appearance of the conservation area and would also affect the wider historic setting within which nearby listed buildings are experienced. The harm would not arise from the principle of residential conversion, but from the detailed form of the roof alterations now proposed. In relation to paragraph 207 of the NPPF, the applicant has identified that the site lies within the Sompting Conservation Area and has provided some contextual information on the building, the conservation area and the previous reason for refusal. However, the submitted information does not provide a sufficiently clear or proportionate assessment of the significance of the affected heritage assets, the contribution made by the existing roof form, or the impact of the proposed box dormers on the conservation area and wider

	setting of listed buildings. Paragraph 207 is therefore only partly satisfied, and the information submitted does not adequately justify the harmful roof additions. In addition to the physical impact of the proposed roof alterations, the public house use itself has heritage relevance within this modest linear settlement. The Gardeners Arms has historically provided a community focus within West Street and has contributed to the social cohesion and lived character of the conservation area. Its function as a meeting place and local amenity forms part of the way in which the settlement is experienced, supporting not only social activity but also the practical attractiveness of occupation within the surrounding historic building stock. The permanent loss of the public house would therefore remove an important community focus and, in the Council's view, would risk weakening the amenity base that supports the ongoing viability and sustained occupation of other buildings within the conservation area, including listed buildings. This social and functional dimension should form part of the assessment of significance and impact, particularly where the proposal would result in the loss of the last public house serving the historic village core. The application would result in the loss of the public house use, which forms part of the social, communal and functional significance of this modest linear settlement, and would thereby remove an important community focus within the Sompting Conservation Area. In addition, the proposed large box dormers would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area and would cause less than substantial harm to its significance, as well as harm to the wider setting of listed buildings. The harm arising from both the loss of the community function and the harmful roof alterations has not been clearly and convincingly justified and is not considered to be outweighed on the basis of the information submitted. The proposal therefore conflicts with section 16 of the NPPF, the statutory duty under section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and Adur Local Plan Policies 15, 16 and 17.
Design Review:	

Simon Richard
Conservation Consultant for and on behalf of Adur and Worthing District Council
30 June 2026