

Development Management – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/1450/25 **Recommendation:** – REFUSE

Site: **The Hollies 83 Little High Street Worthing West Sussex**

Proposal: **Change of use to a single dwelling house (Use Class C3).**

Date of Site Visit: 16 January 2026

Neighbours Checked: **Y**

Additional Neighbours Notified: **N**

Site and Surroundings

The site comprises a two-storey detached building, located on the corner of Little High Street and Upper High Street. The applicant has advised that the last use of the building was as a skin and wellness retreat. An area of hardstanding is located to rear, currently used for parking with access from Upper High Street.

The site is located within the Little High Street Conservation Area, one of Worthing's earliest historic quarters. This area is defined by its narrow lanes, modestly scaled buildings, and the traditional interplay between residential properties and small commercial uses. Its significance stems from the surviving 18th- and 19th-century townscape, comprising a blend of Georgian and early Victorian buildings that illustrate Worthing's early seaside development and the historic evolution of the harbour's fishing community.

The Hollies occupies a prominent corner position at the eastern end of Little High Street, forming an important element of the street's visual enclosure. Its presence reinforces the historic grain, strengthens the sense of continuity within the Conservation Area, and contributes positively to the character and appearance of the surrounding townscape.

The building is a grade II listed building with the following list entry:

LITTLE HIGH STREET 1. 5406 (North Side) No 83 (The Hollies) TO 1503 19/212 II
2. A detached house of before 1815, standing prominently at the east end of the street, at the head of High Street. Pale fawn-coloured brick. Hipped slate roof. 2 storeys. 3 arches incised in facade, enclosing 3 sash windows with glazing bars. 6-panel door within probably Victorian wooden porch, with carved openwork gable projecting on brackets.

A protected tree is located in the front garden (01/00086/TPO).

Proposal

The proposal is to change the use to a single dwellinghouse. The existing use has been provided on the application form as Ea – display/ sale of goods other than hot

food. The last known use was as a wellness clinic. The existing use is described further below.

No external works are proposed. The plans show the removal of a kitchen at first floor level and replacement with utility and change from store to WC at ground floor. The listed building consent submitted with the application was returned to the applicant at validation

Relevant Planning History:

01/00708/LBC - Application for Listed Building Consent for alterations to existing garage/store to form games and utility rooms including alterations to fenestration (windows and doors), formation of moulded parapet and smooth render to north, east and south walls, removal of timber gates and adjacent wall and install 2 x 1.8 metre metal gates.

STATUS: Conditional Consent 22nd August 2001.

01/00709/FULL - Alterations to existing garage/store to form games and utility rooms including alterations to fenestration (windows and doors), formation of moulded parapet and smooth render to north, east and south walls, removal of timber gates and adjacent wall and install 2 x 1.8 metre metal gates.

STATUS: Conditional Consent 22nd August 2001.

93/05328/FULL - CHANGE OF USE TO CLASS B1 (BUSINESS USE); FORMATION OF HARDSTANDING AND EXTENSION TO BOUNDARY WALL

STATUS: Application Permitted 14th January 1994.

94/05349/FULL - CHANGE OF USE FROM OFFICES TO SOCIAL CENTRE FOR PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

STATUS: Conditional Consent 25th May 1994.

94/05350/FULL - CHANGE OF USE OF STORE ADJOINING EXISTING DAY CENTRE TO A CHARITY SHOP

STATUS: Conditional Consent 19th October 1994.

95/05330/FULL - APPLICATION TO VARY CONDITION 3 OF PLANNING CONSENT WB/94/0227 TO EXTEND OPENING HOURS TO 9.00 PM MONDAY TO FRIDAY

STATUS: Conditional Consent 26th April 1995.

96/05370/FULL - APPLICATION FOR CONTINUED USE OF PREMISES AS A SOCIAL CENTRE FOR PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS (CONSENT REFERENCE WB/94/0227 REFERS). PERMANENT PERMISSION SOUGHT

STATUS: Conditional Consent 10th April 1996.

07/0875/LBC - Application for Listed Building Consent for the installation of a smoking shelter in front garden area.

STATUS: Conditional Consent 19th September 2007.

07/0876/FULL - Provision of a smoking shelter in front garden area.

STATUS: Conditional Consent 19th September 2007.

AWDM/1360/15 - Change of use from office to mixed use office and yoga studio with associated internal alterations.

STATUS: Application Returned.

AWDM/0374/20 - Listed Building Consent for internal alterations including relocation of kitchen and conversion of WCs into shower rooms

STATUS: Application Permitted 20th May 2021.

AWDM/1100/22 - Listed Building consent to remove and rebuild 2no. chimneys on West elevation

STATUS: Application Permitted 18th October 2022.

AWDM/1118/22 - Remove and rebuild 2no. chimneys on West elevation

STATUS: Application Permitted 18th October 2022.

Consultations

West Sussex County Council (as LHA):

This application is for the change of use of 83 Little High Street from commercial to residential to create a single dwelling house. The site is located on the corner of Little High

Street and Upper High Street. Upper High Street and Little High Street are D-classified roads subject to speed restrictions of 30 mph. Upper High Street is a one-way road for use travelling north to south.

The Local Highway Authority (LHA) has reviewed data supplied to WSCC by Sussex Police over a period of the last five years. There have been no recorded injury accidents within proximity of the dwelling within the adjoining public highway, Little High Street and Upper High Street. There is no evidence to suggest that the existing access is operating unsafely, or that the proposed change of use would exacerbate an existing safety concern.

The site is served by an existing access onto Upper High Street. This access has been in use for some time and most recently served the property in its use as a Beauty Therapy/ Skin and Wellness Retreat. Whilst no data has been provided for the proposed residential use, the LHA acknowledge that commercial uses are generally more intensive uses than residential, and therefore the LHA would not anticipate that the proposals would result in a material intensification of movements or exceed that which could be generated by the property under its existing use.

Three vehicular parking spaces are proposed for this development. From observation of the plans provided, the spaces look of reasonable size to accommodate three average sized vehicles. The use of all three spaces may however prevent the use of the gated access. The gates must not be altered to open outward of the property as this will provide an obstruction onto the publicly maintained highway/footway. The WSCC Car Parking Demand Calculator indicates that a development of this size and location would require three car parking spaces. Therefore, the parking allocation as shown is anticipated to satisfy the likely demand.

It is likely that the use of this parking provision would require a reverse manoeuvre to either access or egress the property, although a turn on site would be preferred, the LHA is mindful that this has been an existing practise for some time and has operated with no known highway safety concerns.

Cycle parking provisions have not been demonstrated within the submitted plans. Cycling is a viable option in the area and the inclusion of cycle parking provision will help promote the use of sustainable transport methods. The LPA may wish to consider whether this would be a reasonable request alongside this proposal.

Conclusion

The LHA does not consider that this proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network, therefore is not contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 116), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.

A condition securing secure and covered cycle parking should be sealed against this proposal, should the LPA deem this to be a reasonable request.

Cycle parking

No part of the development shall be first occupied until covered and secure cycle parking spaces have been provided in accordance with plans and details submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To provide alternative travel options to the use of the car in accordance with current sustainable transport policies.

WSP (as drainage consultant)

Following a review of the submitted information, we have no objection on surface water grounds. Due to the site, size, location, and type of development we would recommend the approval of the application.

Southern Water

Insufficient Information provided

Construction of the development shall not commence until details of the proposed means of foul/surface water drainage disposal have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with Southern Water.

Heritage Consultant

No objection – no harm

It should be noted that the application is not an application for Listed Building Consent, due to no physical works being proposed. The applicant should be made aware that alteration to the listed building that would affect its historic or architectural interest whether that be internally or externally will require listed building consent. In this case the applicant should be mindful of this when installing any new services or carrying out any alteration.

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 confers a statutory duty to LPAs when considering whether to grant planning permission, to

have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.”

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 confers a statutory duty to LPAs when exercising planning functions, to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.” The LPA’s duties are reinforced within Section 16 of the NPPF, Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value. These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.

As such, when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. Other elements held within Section 16 will also be considered as will Local Policy.

The proposal brings about no harm to the listed building in physical terms as no works are proposed, the application solely relates to use. In heritage terms it is considered that returning the building to a residential use will bring about the potential for long term heritage benefits. The nature of commercial use leads to transience of business uses and ultimately piecemeal modifications and adaptations. As a residential dwelling the building is more likely to enjoy a period of fit and proper preservation of its architectural and historic interest. This is not only compliant with legislation but also local and national policy, according with the ambition of Section 16 of the NPPF and Policy DM24 of the Worthing Plan.

Informative recommended: “The applicant is advised that the granting of this planning permission does not authorise any works to the listed building that would impact the buildings special architectural and historic interest. Any such works require Listed Building Consent in accordance with Section 7 of The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.”

Environmental Protection, Environmental Health & Licensing: recommends a condition on hours of construction.

The Worthing Society:

Thank you for requesting our comments in respect of the above planning application which relates to an important Grade II Listed Building occupying a landmark position within the Little High Street Conservation Area. The Hollies dates from the early 19th century and is of historical significance.

I have now had the opportunity to discuss the plans with our Heritage Team who consider that the change of use from a commercial property to a self-contained residential home will be advantageous and should ensure the ongoing care of the building. The Team were pleased to note that no changes to the historical features are planned and the landscaped front garden, which is important to the characterful setting

of the property, will remain. The retention of the central staircase is, in our view, particularly important.

We do not, of course, have access to the building so respectfully suggest that any further details regarding the proposed layout of the rooms are referred to the Conservation Officer for guidance.

I hope this is helpful and I am pleased to advise you that the Society has no objection to this application.

Neighbour Representations: None received

Relevant Planning Policies:

Worthing Local Plan policies (WBC 2023): SP1, SS1, DM1, DM2, DM5, DM7, DM8, DM15, DM16, DM17, DM18, DM19, DM20, DM21, DM22, DM24

National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG 2024)

National Planning Practice Guidance

SPG 'Extending or Altering Your Home' (WBC)

Planning Assessment:

Principle of development

The site is currently vacant, but the applicant advises the last use of the site was as a wellness clinic. The planning permission referred to above in 1996 included a restrictive condition as follows:

"1. The premises shall only be used as a social centre for the mentally ill and for no other purpose without the prior consent of the Local Planning Authority in an application on that behalf.

Reason: To restrict the introduction of other uses which may be less acceptable in this location and to safeguard the amenities of neighbouring properties.

There has been no planning permission since the 1996 permission which alters the use class of the property. It is therefore considered that the site is Use Class E(e) – provision of medical and health services and is considered a community facility.

Policy DM8 (Planning for sustainable communities / community facilities) will apply as follows:

e. Development which would result in the loss of community facilities will normally be resisted and will only be permitted where:

- i) an accessible replacement facility of a similar nature is provided that meets the needs of its current and intended users, as well as the local community; or*
- ii) it can be demonstrated that the existing premises are no longer required or viable in their current use and the premises have been appropriately marketed for an alternative community use.*

In response to pre-application advice advising of the building being considered a community facility the planning statement provides an assessment on the proposed loss of the existing use.

It states “The pre-application advice referred to the 1996 planning consent which authorised the use of the property as a social centre. While that use originally fell within Class E(e), the building has not been occupied for community purposes for many years. Its subsequent and most recent operation as a Skin and Wellness Retreat and Beauty Clinic also fell within Class E but was a private commercial enterprise rather than a public facility.

Both the earlier and later uses are therefore within the same broad use class, and no planning permission was required for the transition between them. The property’s lawful use before becoming vacant is Class E, not as an active community facility.

Policy DM8 of the Worthing Local Plan seeks to retain existing community facilities but applies only where such a facility exists and provides a social function to the wider community. As the site’s recent use was a private business, the proposal does not constitute the loss of a community facility, and no marketing evidence is required.”

It is recognised that both the existing use and the consented use in 1996 now fall within Use Class E. However, moving between uses within the use class is not permitted where a condition on a previous consent specifically restricts a use from changing, even within the same use class. No evidence has been submitted to outline how long the existing business has been in place and whether it would be immune from enforcement.

In an appeal decision (APP/M3835/W/24/3351194 decision date 26 June 2025) for a development in Worthing Town Centre an Inspector assessed the loss of Gospel Hall, also considered a community facility. Although not in current use the Inspector found that its loss and replacement did not accord with policy DM8 stating “The Hall is currently not in use as a community facility, and this has been the case for some time. Nevertheless, there is no compelling evidence before me, such as a marketing exercise, to demonstrate that the lack of use of the building is due to a lack of need from the local community for a building of this use and of this size.”

It is therefore considered that insufficient information has been provided to assess the proposal against the criteria of policy DM8. A replacement facility has not been provided and marketing for an alternative community use has not been undertaken.

While the provision of a residential unit would make a small contribution to Worthing’s housing need, the principle of the change of use needs to be established first. The application is recommended for refusal on this basis.

Visual Amenity

At validation a schedule of works was requested for the associated listed building consent. The agent confirmed by email that no external or internal works were proposed and as such the listed building consent was returned. Having reviewed the

plans further it is noted that a store at ground floor is being changed to a utility and a kitchen to a utility room at first floor. More detail on these changes would need to be submitted with a revised application to determine the impact on the listed building.

Residential Amenity

The proposed change of use would return the building to residential use. The nearest residents are located to the north at 3 Upper High St. This two-storey dwelling has a blank façade for the majority of their shared boundary with the application site. To the rear is a small amenity space. The development does not result in any additional windows so there won't be any perceptible change in overlooking from the existing rear facing windows. Properties to the east across Upper High St are sufficiently remote that the change of use won't result in adverse amenity impacts. As noted in the planning statement, the change of use from a business will likely enhance the living conditions as customer visits, deliveries and traffic movement with the existing use will cease.

Hours of works has been recommended by the EHO but is not considered necessary given no operational development works are proposed.

Transport and Servicing

The site has off-street parking for use by residents. The LHA raised no objection on highways grounds. A suggested condition for cycle parking would have been applied in the event planning permission was granted. It would be for the applicant to determine whether a cycle store would affect the special architectural interest of the building and therefore require listed building consent.

There is space on site to the rear to provide bins for the residents.

Conclusion

The proposal to provide a residential unit on site would make a small contribution to the borough's housing supply. However, the last lawful use of the property was as a social centre for mentally ill people which is considered a community facility. No robust evidence has been provided by the applicant outlining when that use ceased and whether subsequent uses are lawful. It is considered that the loss of the community use has not been justified, and the development is recommended for refusal on that basis.

Recommendation:

REFUSE for the reason:

In the absence of robust evidence, the Local Planning Authority is not satisfied that it has been satisfactorily demonstrated that the property is no longer required or viable as a community facility, contrary to policy DM8 of the Worthing Local Plan (2023) and the NPPF.

Informative

1. Proactive refusal

Is recommendation contrary to letter(s) of representation? N

Case Officer: Louise Prew

Date: 03/03/2026

Authorised by: Jo Morin

Date: 03.03.2026