

Dear Sir/Madam,

Planning Application comments have been made. A summary of the comments is provided below.

Comments were submitted at 14/07/2026 9:22 AM from Claire Hunt.

Application Summary

Address: Courtlands 37 Parklands Avenue Worthing West Sussex BN12 4NG

Proposal: Change of use of the site to a Special Educational Needs (SEN) School (Class F1) for up to 80 pupils, including retention of two replacement outbuildings (sheds), erection of 2no. lodge-style classroom buildings, installation of a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA), polytunnel and associated external works including 3.34m high gate piers (with in-built CCTV camera) and automated metal entrance gates to the drive and galvanised steel security perimeter fencing.

Case Officer: Jo Morin

[Click for further information](#)

Customer Details

Name: Claire Hunt

Email:

Address: 51 Northcourt Road Worthing West Sussex

Comments Details

Commenter Type: Councillor

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Reasons for comment:

- Design
- Other
- Overdevelopment
- Privacy Light and Noise
- Trees and Landscaping

Comments: Whilst there is an urgent need to increase the number of Special Educational Needs places in Worthing, as everywhere, I am objecting to this application on the following grounds.

1. Over-development

The current permitted use as a residential /care facility (Class C2) for 23 students was granted under AWDM/2234/21 in 2022 as an appropriate intensity of use for this Grade II listed building and site in a quiet residential area. It said in the Planning Approval, "There shall be no more than 23 children (aged between 11 and 18 years) resident at the facility at any one time. The provision of educational services on the site shall be limited to resident children only." However, ECE

Planning Consultants unapologetically note in 1.4. of their 'Planning, Design, Access and Transport Statement for the current application "Since opening in 2023, the site has operated successfully as Courtlands Independent Special School, a day school provision. The approved overnight accommodation has not been implemented, and the facility has operated solely as a non-residential specialist school". The accompanying Travel Plan acknowledges that in fact an average of 55 day students have been attending, 239% more than the amount that was approved. This is only now being acknowledged in the context of applying for even more development. Applications have to be considered on their own merit and this application for extra facilities to enable 80 day students provides an opportunity to assess its materially different character and impact from the original. But also the disregard for and 'creep' beyond the specific terms and intensity of an approval is deeply concerning and might be a predictor for future behaviour.

I can't see any design for toilet facilities that might be required for students using the buildings in the grounds so will that become another future increase in development? Given the changing nature of the detail in the application (see below) does the design and planning meet the required standards of quality and are the designs therefore fit for purpose?

2. Amenities of neighbouring residential occupiers

The pre-application guidance stated clearly that the siting of the proposed new 'classroom lodges' in proximity to 35 Parklands Avenue and 3 Warnham Close "is somewhat insensitive and in both cases is likely to have an unneighbourly impact on these properties". Despite the Planning Consultant saying that the siting has been 'slightly' revised, the residents of both properties, who do not object to the principle of Courtlands being used for the original type of SEN provision, remain deeply concerned and have submitted objections and their concerns should be given weight.

The applicant states at 6.6.3 that it seeks "consent to regularise planning in relation to retaining the 2no. new sheds, as shown in Figure 1, and which replace the existing old and disused sheds". However, substantial unauthorised works have recently taken place on site, disturbing residents, with unauthorised lopping and pruning of trees with TPOs, with large machinery potentially damaging tree roots, and resulting in one of these 'sheds' being greatly enlarged and redesigned. It is now referred to in supporting documents as a 'Large shed/Lodge' and is of a similar design to the actual proposed classroom lodges. Residents have observed it has already been used as a classroom. An Enforcement notice (AWEN/0152/25) was necessary to stop further work and use (for storage or any other purpose) pending consideration of the planning application. More recently submitted supporting documents now say 'The existing shed/lodge forms an important part of the educational provision at Courtlands Independent Special School and supports the school's specialist approach to teaching and learning for pupils with additional needs.' Once again, a 'fait accompli' has been performed with no consideration for Planning rules or residents amenity and with contradictory justifications in the Application.

The applicant states that noise will be mitigated by keeping doors and windows

closed. The recent extreme heat events and previous pandemic should warn that this is not an acceptable mitigation in a rapidly changing climate and for health reasons.

3. Transport and highway safety impacts

There is at my time of writing no assessment from WSCC of the applicants report on the transport impacts of the development and mitigation measures. But given an almost 350% increase in capacity from 23 to 80 students, despite the amount of sustainable travel stated, the increased traffic generation and potential impacts for on-street parking in Parklands Avenue (during peak drop-off and collection times) should be carefully assessed.

4. Effect on designated heritage assets and their settings

The Heritage Advisor has stated that the size and placement of the proposed replacement ancillary storage 'sheds' shown on the submitted drawing ARC/012/25/20 will need to be fully justified in terms of need and located within an ancillary area. They note that 'the proposed classroom 'lodges' are 'sizeable structures, likely to project a strong visual presence, which it may not be possible to mitigate through siting and context alone. The siting of the proposed northeast lodge building in proximity to the listed building, particularly the listed gazebo, and where it would also likely be visible in public view from Parklands Avenue (in angled views across the frontage of No.35), is unlikely to be supportable.' The garden, lake and woodland are all important elements that contribute positively to the setting of the listed house (and associated listed garden structures).

The application's Heritage Statement seeks to justify the addition of classrooms and MUGA and retention/expansion of 'sheds' as causing 'less than substantial harm' to the significance of the heritage assets. But paragraphs 212-213 of the NPPF state that 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 irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm.

5. Effect on green infrastructure (trees)

Many of the trees in the grounds are subject to TPOs and already some have had potentially damaging or unauthorised works performed on or around them. This site is within a green corridor noted in the councils' strategic Vision for Nature' and any over-development will be in conflict with this.
