Expiry Date - 01/09/2025
Extension of Time -

Development Management – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/0873/25 **Recommendation: – APPROVE**

Site: **Unit West Of Becket Buildings Littlehampton Road Worthing West Sussex**

Proposal: **Demolition of existing workshop buildings to the rear (South) of 1 Becket Buildings to develop three 1-bedroom dwelling houses with landscaping to communal courtyard, plus bins and cycle store.**

Date of Site Visit: 20.08.2025

Neighbours Checked: Y

Additional Neighbours Notified: Y – Amended Plans and Description

Site and Surroundings

The application relates to 2-storey and single-storey brick-built commercial buildings (Class E) located to the rear of 1-5 Becket Buildings and 113-141 Rectory Road, backing onto a vacant vehicle repair garage (formerly Cedar Garage) at 3 Littlehampton Road, and a printer's workshop, 16 Highfield Road.

The commercial buildings, which at the time of the officer site visit were vacant and boarded up, front a private drive accessed from Littlehampton Road (between 1 Becket Buildings and 1/1A Littlehampton Road). The drive also provides vehicle access to a row of vacant garage buildings located directly opposite the commercial units, and pedestrian access to the rear of the flats/maisonettes above the frontage buildings in Rectory Road/Becket Buildings. At the time of the officer's visit, the area in front of the commercial buildings/garages was fenced off with metal mesh fencing and a touring caravan sited at the far southern end.

The above-mentioned vacant garage buildings, 113-141 Rectory Road and 1-5 Becket Buildings are all in the same freehold ownership as the application site and are all included within the designated Thomas A Beckett shopping centre.

Adjoining the site to the north is 1/1A Littlehampton Road, a mixed-use building consisting of a restaurant/takeaway on the ground-floor with residential flats on 2 floors above. The takeaway (including ancillary rear storage building) benefits from vehicle access from the above-mentioned private drive. Access to the upper floor flats is from the rear via the private drive.

Adjoining the site to the south is Becket Court, a 3-storey purpose-built flat building with garaging to the rear accessed from Rectory Road.

The site is not listed or locally listed, or within a conservation area. There are no trees on the site.

The site is identified to be at risk of surface water flooding now or in the future based on the Government's Flood Risk for Planning maps.

Proposal

Following amendment, permission is sought to demolish the existing single and 2-storey commercial buildings and erect a 2-storey terrace of 3no 1-bedroom houses.

The proposed terrace would adjoin the western and south site boundaries, fronting the private access drive to form a central communal courtyard shared with an extant development scheme for the demolition of the existing vacant garages and redevelopment to provide 3no dwellings (AWDM/0081/23).

The terrace building would be 22.6m long and 5.356m deep with a part pitched, part flat-topped roof having a maximum height of 5.85m. The pitched roof would sit behind a parapet at the front measuring 4m high. Each unit would have a centrally positioned front box dormer 2.65m wide positioned nominally below the flat roof. At the rear, the pitched roof would have an eaves 3.85m high. The proposed dwellings would have a single aspect facing onto a landscaped courtyard from which they would be accessed.

Each dwelling would consist of an open-plan kitchen/living/dining area on the ground-floor, leading off an entrance lobby, with separate utility room and understairs WC. The upper floor would consist of a double bedroom with separate bathroom.

Heating/hot water would be provided by ASHPs located within a shallow, walled frontage of each dwelling, plus solar PVs on the central flat roof.

Bin and bike storage shared with the 3no dwellings approved under AWDM/0081/23 would be provided within an enclosure on the opposite (east) side of the central courtyard, immediately to the north of the above-mentioned approved terrace.

Relevant Planning History:

<u>Two-storey commercial/workshop building west of Becket Buildings</u>
NOTICE/0014/21: Application for Prior Approval of Proposed Change of use from Commercial, Business and Service (Use Class E) to form 2no. 1 bedroom residential units (Use Class C3). Prior Approval Required and Granted 14th December 2021 – Lapsed without implementation.

<u>Single-storey commercial/workshop building West of Becket Buildings</u>
NOTICE/0002/22: Application for Prior Approval of Proposed Change of use from Commercial, Business and Service (Use Class E) to form 1no. 1 bedroom residential unit (Use Class C3). Prior Approval Required and Granted 21st April 2022 – Lapsed without implementation.

<u>Garage Block to South and West of 1 Becket Buildings</u>
AWDM/0081/23: Demolition of existing garage block to the rear (South) of 1 Becket Buildings to develop three 1-bedroom dwelling houses with landscaping to communal courtyard to the West and construction of bin/cycle store attached to the side (North) elevation. Application Permitted 11th January 2024 – not yet implemented.

Consultations

WSCC: The Local Highway Authority has raised no objection in principle, commenting:-

Initial Comments

"*Summary and Context*
This application seeks the demolition of existing workshop buildings to develop four one-bedroom dwellings. The site is located off Littlehampton Road, an A-classified road subject to a speed restriction of 30 mph in this location. Following an inspection of the application documents, WSCC in its role as Local Highway Authority (LHA) raises no highway safety or capacity concerns for this application.

This site has some relevant history, with application AWDM/0081/23 permitting three residential units adjacent to the application site. WSCC in its role as LHA was a consultee for application AWDM/0081/23, raising no highway safety or capacity concerns.

Access and Capacity
No vehicular access will be associated with the proposed development, owing to the creation of a new communal courtyard. The LHA does not anticipate that the proposals would lead to a significant material intensification of movements to or from the site.

Parking
No vehicular parking is to be provided for this development. The WSCC Car Parking Demand Calculator indicates that a development of this size and location would require at least four car parking spaces. Therefore, vehicular parking would have to be accommodated on-street.

Whilst on-street parking is limited in the area, there are comprehensive parking restrictions in place prohibiting vehicles from parking in places that would be a detriment to highway safety. The LHA does not anticipate that the proposed nil car parking provision would lead to a highway safety concern. However, the LPA may wish to consider the potential impacts on on-street parking from an amenity point of view.

Regarding cycle parking, the plans demonstrate a shared cycle store, which appears suitably sized to accommodate secure cycle parking provision in accordance with WSCC Parking Standards.

Sustainability
The site is situated in a sustainable location within walking/cycle distance of local services and amenities. Cycling is a viable option in this location. A variety of regular bus services can be caught from Littlehampton Road. In addition, West Worthing Train Station is located approximately 1.5km south of the site. Considering this, residents should not need to rely on a private car for travel.

Conclusion

In summary, 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."

The following condition is recommended in the event of approval:

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 to be 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

Amended Proposal

"The application has been reduced in scale, now proposing three one-bedroom dwellings with bin and cycle storage. The LHA are satisfied with the details provided in regard to the proposed cycle storage. All other aspects of these proposals remain acceptable from a highway safety perspective."

The WSCC Fire & Rescue Service have commented that evidence is required to show that all points inside all dwellings are within 45 metres of the location of a fire appliance in accordance with Approved Document B (AD-B) Volume 1: B5 section 13. This is to be measured along the hose lay route, not in a direct line or arc measurement. Any areas not within the 45m distance will need to be mitigated by the installation of domestic sprinkler or water mist systems complying with BS 9251 or BS8458 Standard.

From the plans submitted there does not look to be suitable access for a fire appliance to gain access to the dwelling locations, the fire appliance would then need to attend form Littlehampton Road, which then increases the distance from the fire appliance to the furthest point in each dwelling, a requirement identified in AD-B Volume 1: B5 section 13 including the details given in Table 13.1 and diagram 13.1. This is essential to ensure all points within all dwellings can be reached within the required distance.

[These initial comments have not been updated.]

Southern Water

Southern Water recommends the following condition in the event of approval:

"*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.*"

In order to protect and safeguard the existing water supply apparatus, Southern Water requests formal notification of any proposed demolition works prior to such works being undertaken.

WSP: A holding objection was initially raised by the Council's drainage consultant advising that a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) should be provided that addresses all sources of flood risk and provides details of resistance and resilience measures, plus the Sequential test should be completed as required by the NPPF and accompanying NPPG.

Following submission of a site-specific FRA (Ref: 2026-000056) and Sequential Test V1.2, WSP has no objection subject to recommended conditions 1-3, commenting that it is up to the LPA to determine if the ST is passed.

1. Construction shall not begin until a detailed surface water drainage scheme for the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The surface water drainage scheme must prioritise the use of source control Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in consideration of the Non-Statutory Technical Standards for SuDS and demonstrate no increase in flood risk as a result of the Proposed Development with sufficient supporting evidence provided to support its viability including supporting calculations for the 100% AEP (1 in 1 year), 3.33% AEP (1 in 30 year), 3.33% AEP (1 in 30 year) plus climate change, the 1% AEP (1 in 100 year) and the 1% AEP (1 in 100) plus climate change critical storms. The design should follow the hierarchy of preference for different types of surface water drainage disposal systems as set out in Approved Document H of the Building Regulations, and the recommendations of the SuDS Manual produced by CIRIA. Winter groundwater monitoring and winter infiltration testing to BRE DG365, or similar approved, will be required to support the design of any infiltration drainage. The scheme shall subsequently be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the development is completed.

   Reason: *To ensure the flood risk is adequately addressed and not increased in accordance with NPPF and policies of Worthing Council.*

2. The development hereby approved shall not be occupied until details of the maintenance and management of the sustainable drainage scheme have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The drainage scheme shall be implemented prior to the first occupation of the development hereby approved and thereafter managed and maintained in accordance with the approved details in perpetuity. The Local Planning Authority shall be granted access to inspect the sustainable drainage scheme for the lifetime of the development. The details of the scheme to be submitted for approval shall include:
   I. a timetable for its implementation.
   II. details of SuDS feature and connecting drainage structures and maintenance requirement for each aspect including a drawing showing where they are located.
   III. a management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development which shall include details of design life and the arrangements for adoption by any public body or statutory undertaker, or any other arrangements to secure the operation of the sustainable drainage scheme throughout its lifetime. This

will include the name and contact details of any appointed management company.

Reason: *To ensure that the development achieves a high standard of sustainability and ensure the flood risk is adequately addressed for each new dwelling and not increased in accordance with NPPF and policies of Worthing Council.*

3. All development shall be constructed in accordance with the submitted and approved resistance and resilience measures outlined in the FRA (ref: FRA-2026-000056, dated 01 June 2026) unless otherwise first approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

   Reason: *To ensure the flood risk is adequately addressed and not increased in accordance with NPPF and policies of Worthing Council.*

Adur and Worthing Councils

The ***EHO (Environmental Protection)*** has raised no objection in principle, subject to controls on hours of construction works, approval/implementation of a Construction Management Plan during demolition/construction works, a precautionary condition requiring investigation of any contamination not previously identified, and ASHP Noise Report.

Environmental Health Private Sector Housing: No comments received.

Waste Services: No comments received.

Neighbour Representations

1 objection has been received to the initial submission from the Becket Residents Association on the following grounds:

- Gross overdevelopment in conjunction with the 3 dwellings approved under AWDM/0081/23 and this new proposal is a greedy attempt to cram more houses into a tiny area.
- There is no provision or space for parking. This is of great concern in what is already a highly congested area. Although the provision of cycle storage is very positive, it cannot be presumed that all new residents will be using cycles for their everyday commuting needs. Pressure of parking is a serious local issue. Residents on Littlehampton Road utilise Highfield Road, Highdown Avenue, Northfield Road, Chantry Road and the very small provision in Rectory Road. In addition, the Cedar Garage business also uses these roads for parking client vehicles and their staff regularly park here as well. This already leads to people illegally parking on the corners of junctions.
- The existing drainage infrastructure in the Becket Residents Association area is under strain as it has been for a considerable time - there are a number of drains that flood when it is raining (not only at times of high rain fall) and cause disruption to traffic and pedestrians. We are very concerned that the addition of households to the very prone area of flooding will exacerbate the problem. We

have regularly reported these concerns and are currently working on raising further awareness with the Tarring Flood Action Group.

- Access for storage and collection of refuse and recycling. The sheer amount for an additional 7 properties (the 4 requested as well as the 3 permitted) would be overwhelming. There has been historical concern regarding fly tipping and the management of refuse in the area, with the recent reduction in collection rate already causing problems with overflowing bins attracting even more vermin to the area.

The amended plans have been re-publicised but no further representations received.

Relevant Planning Policies:

Worthing Local Plan policies (WBC 2023): SP1, SS1, DM1, DM2, DM5, DM11, DM13, DM15, DM16, DM17, DM18, DM20, DM22
National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG 2026)
National Planning Practice Guidance
SPD 'A Guide to Residential Development' (WBC 2013)

Planning Assessment:

Principle of Development

Policy HO3 (expanded by Annex D) of the NPPF (2026) requires that local planning authorities to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing assessed against their housing requirement set out in the development plan, or against their local housing need where the development plan requirement is more than five years old. The supply of specific deliverable sites should include a buffer (moved forward from later in the plan period) of:
a) 5% to ensure choice and competition in the market for land; or
b) 20% where there has been significant under delivery of housing over the previous three years, to improve the prospect of achieving the planned supply; or
c) For the purposes of decision making only, 20% where a local planning authority has a housing requirement adopted in the last five years examined against a previous version of the Framework published in December 2024, and whose annual average housing requirement is 80% or less of the most up to date local housing need figure calculated using the standard method set out in Annex D.

Policy SS1 of the Worthing Local Plan (adopted 2023) sets out the Housing supply over the period 2020-2036 and gives a total figure of 3672 (an annual target of 230 dwellings per annum).

The most recent 5 Year housing land supply position for Worthing (as at 01/04/2023) demonstrates a 6.3-year supply which included a 20% buffer.

The Housing Delivery Test 2025 (published August 2026) shows that Worthing scored 142% and faces no consequences from the HDT.

Having a 5-yr land supply position (+ buffer) and having passed the HDT with no consequences means that development proposals should be determined in accordance with policies S3 and S4 of the NPPF which require that development proposals which accord with an up-to-date development plan and the decision making policies of the NPPF to be approved without delay, unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by adverse effects when assessed against the national decision making policies of the NPPF.

As part of the Council's commitment to plan positively to meet housing needs it is anticipated that smaller sites (under 10 dwellings) will play a greater role in housing delivery. Policy SS1 specifically states that the Local Plan will seek to increase the rate of housing delivery from small sites. However, this must be balanced in relation to other key objectives within the Local Plan, not least the need to plan positively to deliver sustainable economic growth within the town, and to meet quantitative and qualitative demand for economic activity over the Plan period.

It is understood the existing buildings on the site were last used as offices/workshops/stores ancillary to the use of 1 Becket Buildings by Bowers & Wilkins. Bowers & Wilkins vacated No.1 in 2020 and the buildings have been vacant since then and are currently boarded up. Whilst the premises are not within a designated industrial/business area, the adopted Local Plan recognises that having a range of sites and premises across the Borough to suit the different needs of businesses is vital to improving the competitiveness of Worthing, and that to achieve this it is important to ensure that existing employment land is protected and used more effectively and efficiently. To this end, policy DM11 seeks to provide a level of protection for existing employment uses outside the key areas unless it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that the site is genuinely redundant and unlikely to be re-used for employment purposes within the Plan period. It states that consideration should be given to various factors, including if no effective demand exists or is likely to exist in the future to use the land or buildings for employment use, taking into account the length of time the property has remained vacant, attempts to sell/let it, and the demand for the size and type of employment premises in the area.

The Applicant's Agent has provided a statement (June 2026) to justify the loss of employment use including the poor physical condition of the buildings of an outdated construction, poor insulation and energy performance, deteriorated roofs and external fabric, obsolete internal layouts and inadequate serving and access. It is stated that the buildings would require substantial and costly upgrades to be of a standard suitable for modern employment and that the commercial rent achievable for such a constrained backland site would not justify the investment required. It is stated that any refurbishment would be commercially unviable, with no realistic prospect of recovering costs through a lease. It is further pointed out that the extant permission under AWDM/0081/23 for the redevelopment of the garages opposite the site further constrain any potential commercial activity due to amenity noise and servicing sensitivities. The Agent has been asked to provide marketing evidence to further assist in the consideration of whether the buildings can be considered genuinely redundant. Scant information has been forthcoming. The Agent advises that that the buildings in question have been marketed by a local commercial agent (Jon Justice & Co) both independently and together with other vacant units within Becket Buildings. Marketing literature has been provided for Nos.2, 4 and 5 Becket Buildings but does not directly

reference the storage/workshops buildings in question and no marketing literature for the actual buildings in question has been provided.

The buildings are undoubtedly in a poor physical condition with broken windows, and it is accepted they are unlikely to be attractive to prospective tenants without significant investment in their renovation and/or refurbishment. It is further recognised that the constrained nature of the shared site access for vehicles, and limited availability of on-site parking/turning is also likely to make the premises less commercially attractive. The extant permission AWDM/0081/23 for the residential redevelopment of the adjacent garages in close proximity to the site is also a relevant factor in this respect.

Consideration is given policy S4 in the revised NPPF, which states that development proposals within settlements should be approved unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies in the Framework. In applying policy S4 it states that the circumstances in which the benefits of approving development are likely to be substantially outweighed by adverse effects include (but are not restricted to) situations where the development proposal would have a substantial adverse impact in relation to the allocation or safeguarding of land or buildings for particular uses in the development plan, unless there is no reasonable prosect of an application coming forward for the allocated use.

NPPF policy L2 states that substantial weight should be given to the benefits where a development proposal would make better use of vacant and underutilised land and buildings such as by (amongst other things) redeveloping underutilised retail and business sites and buildings, service yards, lock-ups, and car parks which are no longer required.

The buildings in question have been vacant for some years and are in a state of disrepair with very little prospect of being reused for commercial or business purposes. The proposed residential redevelopment would make an efficient and effective use of previously developed land which would clearly benefit from improvement and revitalisation.

The site is located to the rear of the main retail shopping frontage in Littlehampton Road/Rectory Road and the proposed residential redevelopment would have no adverse impacts on the vitality or viability of the Thomas A Becket shopping centre.

Visual Amenity and Local Character

Policy DM2 states that development proposals must make efficient use of land which will usually mean developing at densities above those of the surrounding area. It states that the optimum density of a development should result from a design-led approach to determine the capacity of the site with particular consideration given to site context and character of the surrounding area, its level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport, the need to achieve high quality design, the need to minimise environmental impacts, including detrimental impacts on the amenities of adjoining occupiers; and the capacity of the surrounding infrastructure.

Policy DM5 requires all new development to be of a high architectural and design quality and respect and enhance the character of the site and the prevailing character of the area, including considerations of proportion, form, design, context, massing, siting, layout, density, height, size, scale, materials, detailed design and landscaping. New development should enhance the local environment by way of its appearance and character and make a positive contribution to the sense of place, local character and distinctiveness of an area. It should be well-built, accessible and 'fit for purpose' and adaptable to changing lifestyle, demography and climate. New development should (amongst other things) include a layout and design that takes account of the potential users, create safe conditions for access and active travel (walking and cycling) and provide good links to integrated public transport and acceptable parking arrangements.

The Council's SPD 'Guide to Residential Development' states that new housing development should relate satisfactorily to its surroundings and the character of the area so that it fits in and does not have a significant adverse effect on amenity. On small sites such as this, site-specific factors such as the acceptability of the layout, access, design and outlook are key factors that will determine the appropriate amount, scale, form and massing of new development.

The SPD recognises that certain types of 'back-land' development can have negative impacts for the character of an area and on amenity. To minimise impacts its states that development must not be more intensive than adjoining frontage development and should echo the characteristics of existing neighbours. Consideration should also be given to orientation and spacing of facing windows of habitable rooms, the degree of overlooking of neighbouring gardens, the potential negative impact of noise nuisance and impact on natural features and landscape. It states that access to new 'backland' development, including vehicular, pedestrian and cycles, must be of adequate width to allow access for servicing, refuse storage/collection and emergency vehicles.

In this case, the proposed development should also be considered in the context of the extant permission (AWDM/0081/23) for the redevelopment of the redundant/unused garages opposite the site to provide 3no dwellings, with the current proposal sharing the central landscaped 'courtyard'. The latter is a material consideration of some weight.

The proposed terrace would be sited parallel to the approved terrace, across the communal courtyard. The Site Plan approved under AWDM/0081/23 (which at the time assumed the retention of the existing single and 2-storey buildings) included an annotated minimum separation distance of 5.922m between the facing buildings. Following amendment, the revised Site Plan demonstrates that this minimum separation distance would remain.

The overall scale, form, massing and design of the proposed terrace dwellings would now mirror those on the East side of the courtyard which would achieve a better sense of visual cohesion than initially proposed. Although the proposed development in conjunction with AWDM/0081/23 would result in a very compact layout, it is considered the paved courtyard with tree planting would nevertheless help to create a distinctive, 'mews-style' sense of place.

There would only be a narrow angle of public view of the proposed development along the private access drive, framed by the larger scale buildings fronting Littlehampton Road.

Residential Amenity – Future Occupiers

The proposed dwellings would each have a minimum GIA of 58.7 (based on GIA above 1.5m high) which meets the Government's NDSS minimum standard of 58sqm for a 1-bedroom 2-person dwelling over 2 floors.

The main aspect of each dwelling would face East overlooking the shared courtyard facing the 3no dwellings approved under (AWDN/0081/23). A shallow (1m deep) frontage enclosed by a low wall would provide each unit with an area of semi-private space.

The receipt of daylight to, and outlook from, the proposed dwellings would be significantly impacted by the proximity of the 3no dwellings (AWDM/0081/23) opposite. The receipt of daylight to the ground-floor windows serving the main habitable living space would not meet the BRE daylight 25-degree test. The test would however be met for the first-floor windows, and roof lights on the rear (west) roof slope would provide the upper floor accommodation with an alternative source of natural daylight and provide natural ventilation to the proposed bathroom room.

Windows at both ground and first floor would be overlooked by the dwellings opposite at close proximity although this would be partly mitigated by the narrow proportion of the ground-floor windows together with ornamental tree planting within the courtyard which would provide some limited screening. The reduction in the overall scale and amount of development proposed compared to the initial submission is an improvement and on balance it is considered a satisfactory living environment would be provided for future occupiers.

The proposed terrace would be in proximity to potential noises sources including the (currently vacant) vehicle repair garage at 3 Littlehampton Road and the printer's workshop in Highfield Road. The Council's EHO has commented that in line with the 'agent of change' principle, the developer should be looking to mitigate any impacts from the adjacent noise sources and has recommended a condition to this effect.

Residential Amenity – Neighbours

The most affected neighbours would be occupiers of the proposed 3no new dwellings approved under AWDM/0081/23. Although this permission is not implemented, it is nevertheless a material consideration. However, it is considered the effect on the amenities of future residents would be no worse than if the existing buildings were reused for business or commercial purposes.

<u>1-5 Becket Buildings and 113-141 Rectory Road</u>
The proposed terrace of dwellings would be visible to the south and west from the rear-facing windows of the flats/maisonettes above the shopping parade albeit partially

obscured (at least in views from the west) by the siting of the approved terrace of 3no dwellings in front of it.

Given the separation distances involved and the elevated position of the existing residential accommodation above the shopping parade, it is not considered the height and bulk of the proposed terrace building would have any harmful impact on the amenities of these properties.

1/1A Littlehampton Road

There is a separation distance of just over 11m between the nearest residential windows/openings in the main rear (south) wall of 1/1A (i.e. excluding the attached 2-storey storage building) and the north flank wall of the existing 2-storey commercial building. Although marginally lower in overall height, the siting, scale and massing of the proposed terrace building would be similar to this existing relationship (but with no window openings in the side elevation). The first and second-floor windows serving habitable rooms in the rear of 1/1A would overlook the north side of the proposed terrace but would not suffer any materially harmful effects given the siting and orientation of the proposed building.

Becket Court

Becket Court comprises a 3-storey purpose-built flat block located to the south and east of the development site fronting Rectory Road. The front southeast corner of the proposed terrace building would be sited approximately 13m from the rear northwest corner of the flat building. This proximity would allow for some degree of mutual overlooking at an oblique angle between the nearest windows in the front elevation of the proposed 2-storey terrace and the existing windows (ground, first and second floor) in the west elevation of Becket Court albeit curtailed in part by the existing boundary treatment and siting of the south flank wall of the existing garage building (or alternatively the flank wall of the terrace permitted by AWDM/0081/23).

3 Littlehampton Road/16 Highfield Road

The proposed terrace building would adjoin the western site boundary backing onto part of the tall, workshop building and associated walled yard forming part of the vacant car repair garage (formerly Cedar Garage) at 3 Littlehampton Road, and the blank rear wall of the 2-storey, commercial building (a printer's workshop) at 16 Highfield Road. There would be no adverse impacts for these neighbouring commercial premises.

Access and Highways

Access to the proposed dwellings would be from the existing private drive/access off Littlehampton Road which also provides rear access to 113-141 Rectory Road, 1-5 Becket Buildings, and 1/1A Littlehampton Road. The restaurant/takeaway at No.1 has access to one (informal) parking space adjacent to the rear storage building but none of the existing commercial or residential units fronting 113-141 Rectory Road and 1-5 Becket Buildings have formal parking provision at the rear. There is sufficient space for a car/van to turn in the tarmacked area between the rear of 1/1A and the existing 2-storey commercial building, but this is not marked out.

No on-site parking provision is proposed to serve the development, which would be car-free (as is the development approved under AWDM/0081/23).

The local Resident's Association has expressed concerns about the lack of on-site parking provision generating additional demand for on-street parking in nearby residential roads where there is little spare capacity. Double yellow lines prevent on-street parking along Littlehampton Road in the immediate vicinity of the site entrance, but there are no restrictions to parking in the nearby residential roads (Highfield Road, Highdown Avenue, Northfield Road, Chantry Avenue). However, the LHA has not raised any objection to a car-free development on highway safety grounds. Whilst the inconvenience to nearby residents resulting from heavy on-street parking and inconsiderate parking practices is recognised it would not provide justification for refusing the application.

The site is within a sustainable location with good access to local shops and facilities, and reasonably accessible in relation to public transport alternatives such that the LHA has commented that residents would not need to rely on a private car for transport.

Following amendment, the submitted drawings now show dedicated storage provision for bins and bike shared with the scheme approved under AWDM/0081/23. The capacity of the enclosure is considered adequate, but no elevations have been provided to demonstrate if the cycle storage will be covered, and this will need to be secured as a condition of planning permission.

In response to the WSCC Fire & Rescue comments, it is unclear whether fire appliance would be able to get within 45m of all rooms of the development or comply with Part B5 (fire brigade access) of the Building Regulations. If the required 45m distance cannot be met, compensatory measures will be required involving the installation a dry riser and sprinkler system within the new dwellings. It is recognised that this would be a matter for consultation under the Building Regulations, and it is not guaranteed that such measures would provide satisfactory mitigation or be accepted by the Fire Safety Officer. However, regard in this matter is given to policy DM(1) of the NPPF which states that development proposals should be assessed on the basis of whether they would be an acceptable use of land. Matters which are controlled by separate regulatory regimes may, in the context of a particular development proposal, be a material consideration where they have land-use implications, but decision-makers should assume, unless there is clear evidence to the contrary, that those separate regimes will operate effectively.

Flood Risk

Latest flood risk mapping highlights the site to be at risk of surface water flooding taking into account the effects of climate change. The proposal for residential redevelopment would introduce a 'more vulnerable' use. A site-specific FRA (FRA-2026-000056) and sequential test (STM Environmental FINAL V1.2) has been submitted.

The FRA identifies that the long-term risk of flooding is medium for the present day modelled event (2025) and medium for the Climate Change (2040-2060) modelled event, with indicative flood depths identified as not exceeding 0.3m in extreme scenarios (paragraph 15.2.2). Mitigation measures will include raising finished floor levels 300mm above existing ground levels, application of a SuDS drainage strategy,

with flood resilience measures also incorporated into the design of the floor and wall construction, doors and underground drainage. The Council's Drainage Consultant has accepted the conclusions of the FRA and recommends conditions to secure the SuDS strategy and flood resilience measures outlined in the report.

Notwithstanding the comments of the Council's drainage consultant the Policy Officer has confirmed that following the changes to PPG in 2025, the Sequential Test is no longer required in relation to surface water flood risk where the FRA demonstrates that the development will remain safe for its lifetime ad will not increase the flood risk elsewhere.

Biodiversity

The entire site area is covered by buildings or hard surfaces and is exempt from mandatory BNG (the 'de minimis' exemption).

The proposal includes ornamental tree planting within the central courtyard which, assuming its compatibility with the layout and proximity of proposed buildings, would introduce some welcome 'greening' into the existing urban environment.

Other

Policy DM17 requires all new housing development to incorporate renewable and low carbon energy production equipment to meet at least 10% of predicted total energy requirements (after CO2 reductions from energy efficient measures). The submitted drawings demonstrate each dwelling would be provided with an ASHP and solar PVs on the front roof slope. This could be secured as a condition of planning permission in the event of approval**.**

CIL

The development is eligible for CIL.

Conclusion

The existing vacant commercial buildings to the rear of the designated shopping frontage are run-down. The proposed redevelopment will make an effective use of underutilised, previously developed land to provide a modest, mews-style residential scheme that will make a small contribution toward the supply of housing and responds well to the constraints of this small site in a way that is visually attractive and will add to the overall quality of the existing environment.

Recommendation

APPROVE Subject to the conditions: -

1. Time limit
2. Approved plan
3. Agree and implement materials (including windows and doors)
4. Agree and implement architectural details

5. Agree and implement surfacing materials of external areas
6. Agree and implement details of secure, covered cycle storage
7. Agree and implement details of bin storage
8. Agree and implement details of soft landscaping to include not less than 3no trees.
9. Agree and implement noise mitigation measures based on an acoustic assessment of noise impacts from neighbouring commercial units. Test result demonstrating compliance to be submitted and approved prior to first occupation.
10. Agree and implement roof mounted solar PVs.
11. Agree and implement ASHP (including details of noise emissions).
12. EPC (minimum Class B)
13. Agree and implement surface water drainage scheme
14. Agree and implement maintenance and management of sustainable drainage scheme.
15. Agree and implement foul and surface water disposal in discussion with Southern Water
16. Implement flood resistance and resilience measures outlined in the FRA 2026-000056 dated 01 June 2026.
17. Remove PD rights for extensions and alterations
18. Precautionary – investigate potential contamination
19. Agree and implement Construction Management Plan
20. Hours of Construction Work

Informative

Pro-active Amendment

New Address

CIL

WSCC Fire & Rescue (Water & Access Manager) Advice to Applicant

Southern Water

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

Case Officer: Jo Morin Date: 24.09.2026

Authorised by: Peter Barnett Date: 24 September 2026