Expiry Date - 15/05/2024

# Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

**Application Number: AWDM/0375/24 Recommendation – APPROVE**

**Site:** **Pharos House 67 High Street Worthing West Sussex**

**Proposal:** **Creation of additional office space facilitated by the erection of a second-floor mansard roof addition, modifications to the principal elevation, and cycle provision.**

**Date of site visit:** 07.05.24

**Neighbours checked:** Y

**Additional neighbour notifications:** Site notice

**Site and Surroundings**

The application relates to a two storey detached building occupying a prominent site just off the roundabout at the junction of High Street, North Street and Lyndhurst Road. The building currently comprises a mixed use with a retail unit at ground floor and offices on the first floor. Both are now within Use Class E.

The building is of modern construction dating from c.1996, with 'rusticated' painted render at ground floor with yellow brickwork at first floor with stone quoining and detailing. The building is proportioned at the frontage with a central forward projection with pillared entrance porch, feature first floor oval window and pitched roof. The windows either side are proportioned with larger windows at ground floor and smaller windows at first floor. The building is set back behind a shallow, landscaped frontage. The building is higher than the road. At the rear the building has service doors and small windows at ground floor and a run of windows at first floor.

The building forms part of a wider development scheme which included a single storey office building to the south, and supermarket (Lidl) to the northwest. Pharos House has its own car park to the rear (west) shown within the red edge of the application site, which is accessed from the adjacent car park to the Lidl store with a shared vehicular access off North Street. A footpath running obliquely across the northern part of the landscaped frontage of the site links High Street to the Lidl car park.

Adjoining the rear car park to the west is the partly two storey and partly three storey Amelia Court, a sheltered housing complex, accessed off Union Place.

This part of High Street consists of dual carriageway with a central refuge. Waitrose supermarket is located on the opposite side (east) of High Street.

The site is included within the designated North St/High St office area, along with the property to the south.

The Little High Street Conservation Area is situated to the north of site on the opposite side of North Street.

**Proposal**

The application is for the creation of additional office space facilitated by the erection of a second-floor mansard roof addition, modifications to the principal elevation, and cycle provision.

The mansard would involve pulling out the roof on the north and south elevations, retaining the existing height of the roof and providing a flat roof. There would be 4 small flat roof dormers to the front, two either side of the front projection. A flat roof dormer on either side of the proposed roof and five small flat roof dormers to the rear elevation. Roof lights are shown to the flat roof. 245sqm of additional office space would be created.

The application also involve a new cycle parking area in the rear car park.

The applicant's agent has indicated:

*'We noted that the previous application was noted as having 'steeply sloping sides' so we have reduced the angle on the crown roof by 18.5°. It is now only an increase of 20° from the existing roof plane compared to the previous application which was an increase of 38.5°. We believe that this allows us to still make the mansard roof a viable space while decreasing the angle and allowing us to respect the surrounding roof designs. We have reduced to amount, size, and sitting of the proposed dormers. We believe that are now in line with the overall scale of the building and it fenestration reads appropriately with the windows reducing in size on every level. We have also not altered the existing staircase housing to the front of the property as we believed that a good design would keep it as the existing, stepped below the main ridgeline. We believe that all of the above alterations give this proposal balanced proportions with an ordered composition that is easily readable and adds to the original building rather than detract from it*'.

**Relevant Planning History:**
AWDM/1157/22-
Creation of four (4) flats (C3) formed of 3 x 2 and 1 x 1 bed units, facilitated by the erection of a second-floor mansard roof addition, modifications to the principle elevation and refuse/cycle provision. REFUSED and DISMISSED on appeal.

1. By reason of its height, massing, siting, layout and design the proposed extension to form a mansard roof above existing two story development, plus the increased height of the forward staircase,

associated facilities and roof terrace, would have an adverse effect on the architectural form and integrity of this prominent building that would dominate the street scene and be harmful to the setting of nearby designated heritage assets and the Little High Street Conservation Area. The proposal is therefore contrary to policy 16 of the Worthing Core Strategy, policies DM5, DM24 of the Submission Draft Worthing Local Plan (As Modified), the Council's SPD 'Guide to Residential Development' and relevant policies within the National Planning Policy Framework**.**

2. Having regard to the constrained layout of the site and relationship to neighbouring occupiers the proposed development and associated access arrangements would lead to conflict between the proposed residential and existing commercial uses, detracting from the commercial attraction and viability of both Pharos House and nearby businesses. The proposal would not constitute sustainable development and would be contrary to the aims and objectives of policy 3 of the Worthing Core Strategy that seeks to deliver the right conditions for a diverse and sustainable economy, policy 8 of the Worthing Core Strategy which seeks the provision of high quality homes to address the needs of the community, policies DM2, DM11 and DM13 of the Submission Draft Worthing Local Plan (As Modified), saved policy RES7 of the Worthing Local Plan 2003, The Guide to Residential Development SPD 2013 and relevant paragraphs of the National Planning Policy Framework which requires new development to integrate effectively with existing businesses.

3. The proposed development by reason of its design, height, fenestration and roof terrace would be adversely overbearing, overshadow and result in unacceptable overlooking of neighbouring properties in the eastern block of Amelia Court to the detriment of their living conditions. As such it would be contrary to saved Worthing Local Plan policy H18, Policy 16 of the Worthing Strategy, the Guide to Residential Development SPD 2013, Policy DM5 of the Submission Draft Worthing Local Plan (As Modified) and relevant policies of the National Planning Policy Framework**.**

AWDM/2283/21- Two Storey upwards extension to create eight residential units with shared amenity space, refuse store and cycle parking. REFUSED on the following grounds:

1. By reason of its height, massing, siting, layout and design the proposed extension to form two additional floors, plus the increased height of the staircase, associated facilities and roof terrace, would have an adverse effect on the architectural form and integrity of this prominent building that would dominate the street scene and be harmful to the setting of nearby designated heritage assets and the Little

High Street Conservation Area. The proposal is therefore contrary to policy 16 of the Worthing Core Strategy, policies DM5, DM24 of the Submission Draft Worthing Local Plan (As Modified), the Council's SPD 'Guide to Residential Development' and relevant policies within the NPPF.

02. Having regard to the constrained layout of the site and relationship to neighbouring occupiers the proposed development and associated access arrangements would lead to conflict between the proposed residential and existing commercial uses, detracting from the commercial attraction and viability of both Pharos House and nearby businesses. The proposal would not constitute sustainable development and would be contrary to policy 3 of the Worthing Core Strategy that seeks to deliver the right conditions for a diverse and sustainable economy, policy 8 of the Worthing Core Strategy which seeks the provision of high quality homes to address the needs of the community, policies DM2, DM11 and DM13 of the Submission Draft Worthing Local Plan (As Modified), saved policy RES7 of the Worthing Local Plan 2003 and paragraph 187 of the NPPF which requires new development to integrate effectively with existing businesses.

03. The proposed development by reason of its design, height, fenestration and roof terrace would be adversely overbearing, overshadow and result in unacceptable overlooking of neighbouring properties in the eastern block of Amelia Court to the detriment of their living conditions. As such it would be contrary to saved Worthing Local Plan policy H18, Policy 16 of the Worthing Strategy, the Guide to Residential Development SPD 2013, Policy DM5 of the Submission Draft Worthing Local Plan (As Modified) and relevant policies of the National Planning Policy Framework.

AWDM/0761/22 Single Storey upwards extension to create four residential units with shared amenity space, refuse store and cycle parking. Pending consideration.

0517/95. Demolition of existing buildings (on McDougall Rose site) and redevelopment of site with two no. Class A1 retail units and one Class B1 office unit with associated parking/servicing area and formation of new site access from North Street. Application Permitted. 20th December 1995.

96/00402/FULL. Installation of two Windows at First Floor Level on South Elevation (Building No.1). Application Permitted. 23rd July 1996.

Expiry Date - 15/05/2024

**Consultations:**

**WSCC Highways**

Background and Site Context

The application site comprises a two-storey, detached, mixed-use building known as ‘Pharos House’. The building has ground floor retail space and first floor offices, both falling under Use Class E. The building is located within Worthing Town Centre, southwest of the roundabout connecting A259 High Street, North Street and Lyndhurst Road. The site was previously subject to planning applications for various residential schemes. The applications were refused but no objection was raised from highway safety or capacity standpoint. The current proposal is for creation of additional office space facilitated by the erection of a second-floor mansard roof addition, modifications to the principal elevation, and cycle provision.

Access Arrangements

The existing building fronts onto A259 High Street, providing pedestrian access. Vehicular access to the parking court is to the rear of the building facilitated through the adjacent supermarket car park. The existing access arrangements will be retained for the proposed uses.

Parking and Internal Layout

The proposed scheme is made car free. There are 10 nos. car parking spaces allotted for the building. These spaces will be reconfigured to provide a total of 9 nos. car parking spaces with the addition of a safe and secure bike store for 8 nos. bicycles. Delivery and servicing will be carried out from kerbside, in line with existing arrangements. A refuse store has been provided adjacent to the site entrance, within 25 metres distance for the drag / carry distances for waste as stated in Manual for Streets (Mfs) guidance.

Sustainable Accessibility

The site is within short walking distances to shops, services, and amenities within the town centre. There are well-connected footways conducive to walking. Bus stops and Worthing train stations are located within 10 - 15 minutes of walking providing transport links to wider network such as London, Brighton etc. Therefore, the site is in a sustainable location without the need for reliance on private car use.

Conclusion

The Local Highway Authority (LHA) do 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 (NPPF), paragraphs 110 - 113, as revised 20th July 2021. Therefore, there are no transport grounds to resist this proposal.

If the Local Planning Authority (LPA) mind to approve the application, the following condition should be applied:

CONDITION

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 LPA.

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

**Southern Water**

Southern Water requires a formal application for any new connection to the public foul sewer to be made by the applicant or developer.

**Adur and Worthing Councils**

**EHO PSH – No comment**

***Drainage Engineer***

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.

**Representations:**

None received

**Relevant Planning Policies**

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)
National Planning Practice Guidance
Supplementary Planning Document ‘Sustainable Economy’ (WBC 2012)

Worthing Local Plan 2023

SP1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development)
SP2 (Climate Change)
SP3 (Healthy Communities)
SS3 (Town Centre)

DM5 (QUALITY OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT)
DM11(PROTECTING AND ENHANCING EMPLOYMENT SITES)
DM13 (Retail and Town Centre Uses)
DM15 (Sustainable travel and Active Travel)
DM16 (Sustainable Design)
DM18 (Biodiversity)
DM20 (Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage)
DM21 (Water Quality and Sustainable Water Use)
DM22 (Pollution)
DM23 (Strategic Approach to the Historic Environment)
DM24 (The Historic Environment)

**Planning Assessment**

The application has been submitted following two recent refusals and a dismissal on appeal for extensions to the building to form a mansard roof and use for residential.

The current application involves a reduced size and revised design of mansard roof and its use for offices.

Policy DM11 states that at

a) Existing premises, sites or floorspace which are used for, or last used for, employment uses, located within the following Key Employment Areas will be protected against loss to other uses.

b) ii) The following key office locations will be protected: ● Liverpool Terrace/Liverpool Gardens ● Chatsworth Road ● North Street/High Street ● Railway Approach ● Crescent Road ● Farncombe Road

c) These key employment areas are essential in maintaining a strong and diverse supply of employment sites and premises to meet the needs of the local economy and given the significant land constraints the Council are seeking to protect them for employment uses appropriate to their location

d) Outside the identified Protected Key Employment Areas listed above, existing premises and land or floorspace which is used, or was last used, for use employment uses will be protected unless it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that the site (or part of the site) or premises is genuinely redundant and is unlikely to be re-used for employment uses within the Plan period, having regard to the following factors:

i) the primary focus is to be protect existing employment uses however, greater flexibility will be given to other employment generating uses which cannot reasonably be located elsewhere;

ii) if the introduction of any non-employment uses will not negatively impact on the operation of the remaining or neighbouring uses;

iii) if the site, with or without adaptation, would not be capable of accommodating an acceptable employment development;

iv) if no effective demand exists or is likely to exist in the future to use the land or buildings for employment use. Consideration should include the length of time the property has remained vacant, the attempts made to sell/let it and the demand for the size and type of employment premises in the area;

v) if the loss of a small proportion of floorspace would lead to a significant upgrade of the remaining employment floorspace; and

vi) if the existing use conflicts with neighbouring uses.

Policy DM13 Retail and Town Centre Uses seeks to support the vitality and viability of Worthing town centre.

The proposed additional office space would accord with these policies and provide additional office space in the Town Centre within a key office location.

The principle of development to office space is therefore considered to be acceptable and in accordance with policy. A condition will be included to restrict the new floorspace to office use only (Use Class Egi) due to its location within a protected office area.

***The effect on the character and appearance of the area***

The existing building dates from about 1996, is has a neo classical symmetrical style with a central front and pillared porch, it is situated on a prominent corner with a single storey building to the south and Lidl to its north west built at part of a comprehensive development of the site. The wider area contains to the south and west two Listed Buildings - Storm House and Amelia Court, both accessed off Union Place. Storm House lies on the corner with High Street and Union Place, with the listed element of Amelia Court at a further distance away and largely subsumed within the modern development of this elderly persons flat block.

Little High Street Conservation Area lies to the north side of North Street, and extends to include The Corner House PH, 80 High Street, at the junction of High Street and Lyndhurst Road, and also includes 2 nearby Listed buildings – The New Amsterdam PH, 79 High Street and 43 North Street.

The current proposal would involve a mansard roof to replace the existing roof, with small flat roof dormer windows to all the elevations. The roof would then be flat with roof light windows. The existing front projection would be retained and a staircase incorporated within it to provide access to the additional floor of accommodation.

The current building sits comfortably within the street scene with surrounding development of single storey, two storey and part three storey. The proposal would introduce a third storey. Previous applications have been refused on this site introducing a third storey however the design had previously been unacceptable with a steeper pitched roof, the extension of the front projection and a balcony above.

The inspector in their appeal decision in relation to application AWDM/1157/22 states:

*'Due to its considerable bulk, steeply sloping sides, prolific bulky dormers, much taller and more prominent staircase turret, and roof top balustrade, the proposal would be an unacceptably discordant addition to the appeal building. Whilst the mostly 3 storey scale of the extended appeal building would respect the scale of the nearby part of Amelia Court, it would be harmfully at odds with the other mostly 2 storey or single storey buildings close by. The tall staircase turret would be a dominant and incongruous feature in the nearby street scenes. As the windows in the dormers would be about as large and as many as those within the first floor, and their surrounds would add to their bulk, the upper floor fenestration would unacceptably damage the appeal building's balanced proportions and ordered composition'*.

The current application although still increasing the pitch of the replacement roof provides a simpler form of mansard roof with small proportionate dormers and a roof that is no higher than the existing ridge of the roof.

Although the building is prominent and the flat roof will be visible from distant views, the reduced area of this flat roof and portioned design will ensure that it would not be unduly prominent in the street scene or impact on the character or proportions of the building.

Little High Street conservation area lies to the north of the site, part of which adjoins the roundabout that the application site partly fronts on. The conservation area document indicates that 'Vistas along these streets leading to and from the Conservation Area are also important and need protecting from unsympathetic redevelopment'.

Policy DM24 within the WLP requires that development affecting any designated or undesignated heritage asset must be of a high quality, respecting its context and demonstrating a strong sense of place. Development within Conservation Areas will be required to be of a high standard of design and materials so as to respect, preserve and enhance the character and appearance of that area, and preserve important features. It states that the importance to the local area of Buildings of Local Interest within Conservation Areas will be a material consideration in assessing an application of their demolition or development.

The inspector in their decision in relation to AWDM/ 1157/22 states:

*'The proposal would be seen in southward views from the Conservation Area, but it would not be within an important vista, such as those along the residential streets adjacent to the Conservation Area that are referred to in the Council's Conservation Area Appraisal. Due to the proposal's scale and distance from the Conservation Area and its relationships with its surroundings, which would reasonably be expected to evolve over time, it would not harm the setting of that heritage asset'*

Although the development would be visible in views into and out of the conservation area and is within close proximity of listed buildings. With the design currently proposed and the comments from the planning inspector it is not considered that the reduced proposal would have an impact on the conservation area.

A condition restricting additional plant will be attached to ensure the visual impacts of any plant installed can be fully assessed.

***Effect on neighbouring occupiers***

Residential amenity

The most affected residential properties are within Amelia Court, an elderly housing complex made up of a series of inter-connecting 2, 3 and 4-storey buildings. The nearest eastern 'wing' is located approx. 18m from the application site. There are several windows along this elevation at ground, first and second floors (roof space).

The proposal is for office space within this third floor, there are 5 small dormers in the rear elevation facing towards Amenia Court. As an office use, which can be conditioned, it is not expected that usage and overlooking would be a significant, mainly being a daytime use.

The inspector in their appeal decision stated:

*'I consider that the proposal would not harm the living conditions of the occupiers of the nearby flats at Amelia Court, regarding outlook, daylight and sunlight, and privacy'*

Equally it is not considered that the reduced scheme would have an impact on residential amenity of neighbouring properties.

Impacts on commercial properties

The ground and first floor of Pharos House would remain in commercial uses. The proposal would involve building above these existing commercial premises and extending and use of the staircase that is the entrance to the first floor offices. The use would be a further office use which would be compatible with the existing uses.

***Highway safety***

The proposed scheme is made car free. There are 10 car parking spaces allotted for the building. These spaces will be reconfigured to provide a total of 9 nos. car parking spaces with the addition of a bike store for 8 bicycles. A condition is attached requiring details of the bike store prior to first use of the new floorspace and retained.

Delivery and servicing will be carried out from kerbside, in line with existing arrangements. A refuse store has been provided adjacent to the site entrance, within 25 metres distance for the drag / carry distances for waste as stated in Manual for Streets (Mfs) guidance.

The site is within short walking distances to shops, services and amenities within the town centre which is conducive for the residents to switch to more sustainable forms of transport such walking and cycling. Bus stops and Worthing train stations are located within 10 - 15 minutes of walking providing transport links to wider network. Therefore, the site is considered sustainable.

***Sustainability***

The proposals involve an extension above an existing building which in itself is a sustainable form of development. The development would need to comply with Building Regulations standards for sustainability.

**Biodiversity**

The application would involve a roof extension creating 245sqm of additional office accommodation. The development would not involve the loss of any ground area or potential habitats or vegetation. The landscaping to the frontage would be retained. The bike store would be on the existing car park.

**Drainage**

The site is located in an area at medium risk of surface water flooding and low risk from seas and rivers. The application has been reviewed by the council's drainage consultant who raised no objection to the scheme.

**Recommendation**

**Subject to Conditions:-**

1. Approved Plans
2. Commencement
3. The external materials and finishes of the development hereby permitted shall, prior to commencement of use of the additional floorspace thereby created, be completed to match in design, colour and texture those of the existing building or as shown on the approved plans unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

{\b Reason}: {\i In the interests of visual amenity and to comply with policy DM5 of the Worthing Local Plan 2023.}

4. No external plant, flues, ducts or equipment, including any air conditioning/handling units, shall be installed on or at the premises except where permitted by the local planning authority following a separate application on that behalf.

\b Reason}: {\i In the interests of amenity and the environment and to comply with saved policies DM5 and DM22 of the Worthing Local Plan.}

5. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order 2015 as amended (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification) the premises shall be used for offices (as defined within the order) only and for no other purpose within Class E of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order1987 (or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any Statutory Instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification).

    a. {\b Reason:} {\i In the interests of amenity having regard to policies DM5, DM11 and DM22 of the Worthing local Plan.}

6. 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 LPA. The spaces shall be thereafter be retained in accordance with the approved details.

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

7. No work for the implementation of the development hereby permitted shall take place except between the hours of 8.00 a.m. and 6.00 p.m. on Monday to Friday and between 8.00 a.m. and 1.00 p.m. on Saturdays, No work shall take place on the site on Sundays or on Bank or Public Holidays.

{\b Reason}: {\i To safeguard the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring properties having regard to DM5 and DM22 of the Worthing local Plan 2023.}

**Informative**

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Southern Water connection

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

Case Officer: Jackie Fox Date: 05.06.24

Authorised by: Louise Prew Date: 05/06/2024