



**LEWIS & CO**

**PLANNING AND HERITAGE  
STATEMENT**

Provident House, 50 Grafton Road, Worthing, BN11 1QT

ON BEHALF OF THE TRUSTEES OF HUMPHRIES  
ALMSHOUSE



Client: THE TRUSTEES OF HUMPHRIES ALMSHOUSE

Site Location: Provident House, 50 Grafton Road, Worthing, BN11 1QT

Job History:

| Version | Date      | Author | Checked | Notes |
|---------|-----------|--------|---------|-------|
| V1      | 29/1/2026 | LC     | LC      |       |
| V2      | 30/1/2026 | LC     | ZD      |       |
| Final   | 10/2/2026 | LC     | LC      |       |



## CONTENTS

|    |                                       |         |
|----|---------------------------------------|---------|
| 1. | INTRODUCTION & SUMMARY                | Page 3  |
| 2. | APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA | Page 4  |
| 3. | PLANNING HISTORY                      | Page 7  |
| 4. | PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT                  | Page 7  |
| 5. | PLANNING POLICY                       | Page 8  |
| 6. | PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS               | Page 10 |
| 7. | CONCLUSIONS                           | Page 12 |





## 1.0 INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Lewis & Co Planning on behalf of the Trustees of Humphries Almshouse in support of a full planning application for the *change of use of Provident House, 50 Grafton Road, Worthing, from Use Class F1 (School) to Use Class E (Commercial/Business Service/Office Use)*.
- 1.2 This statement will demonstrate that the proposed change of use of the building will not result in the loss of viable education building and will deliver a good quality new office or similar employment generating space home in a sustainable town centre location. The Statement will address all material planning considerations and demonstrate that the proposals are acceptable in all regards.
- 1.1 This Statement should be read in conjunction with the submitted application forms, marketing evidence and appraisal and drawings submitted.



## 2.0 APPLICATION SITE & SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1 Provident House is a single-storey brick building constructed in around 12892 as a permanent Soup Kitchen and distribution centre for coal and bread by the Worthing Provident Relief Society. It operated in this capacity until 1922 (Source: The Worthing Society).
- 2.2 More recently the building was used as a school and offices (pupil exclusion unit) but this use ceased in 2020 and the building has been empty ever since.



*Above: Photo of site's west elevation*

- 2.3 The building contains three main rooms, a kitchen area, staff room, three WCs, two parking spaces, and a private rear garden, with a net internal area of 71.8 sqm.
- 2.4 The site is located within the Chapel Road Conservation area and is part of a group of ecclesiastical or ecclesial adjacent buildings South of Christ Church.

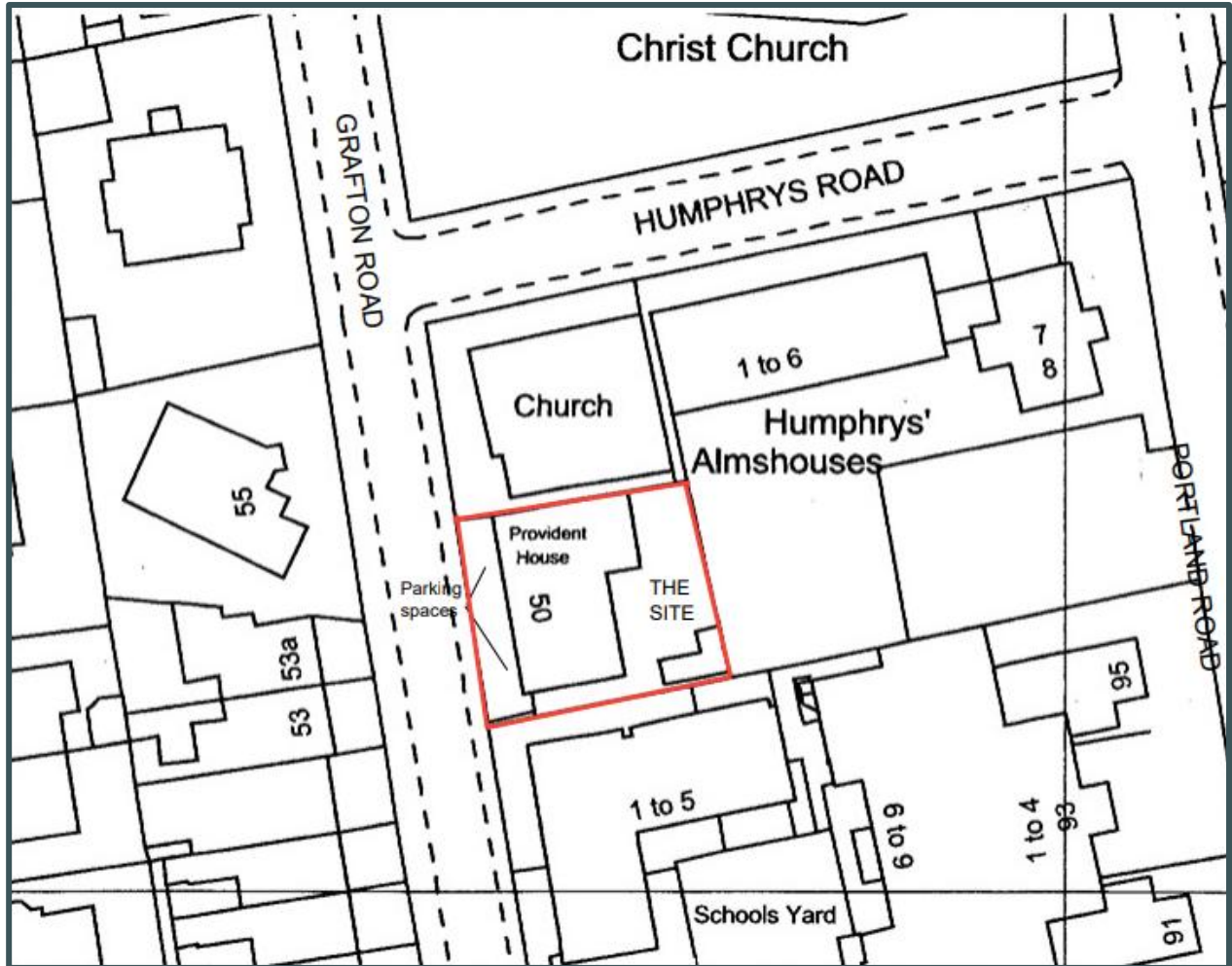


*Above: Aerial Photo of site*

- 2.1. Surrounding streets and buildings are a mixture of predominantly residential and community uses, with some commercial uses in the local mix.
- 2.2. The site is confirmed in the Conservation Area Appraisal as being “*on the fringe of the town centre*” (Source: WDC Conservation Area Appraisal) and the main civic centre of Worthing with the law courts library, Town Hall and Council offices are located a short distance to the north of the site on Richmond Road. The towns main shopping and commercial areas are located close by to the south and east of the site.
- 2.3. The central location of the site in the town is ideal for small office or similar class E uses (Professional services, medical or therapeutic use etc). The location is



highly sustainable, and occupiers and visitors would benefit from the excellent sustainable transport connections.



*Above: Extract of site location plan*



### **3.0 PLANNING HISTORY**

- 3.1 Planning permission was granted in 2011 (WB/10/1001/FULL) for the use as a non-residential institution but was specified as being for the provision of education and ancillary office and this was controlled by condition with no permitted changes within the D1 use class at that time.
- 3.2 The school ceased operation in 2020, and the building is now vacant.

### **4.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

- 4.1 Planning permission is sought for the change of use of the entire building from class F1 (education) to Class E (c, e, and g(i)).
- 4.2 The proposed range of uses is:

#### **Use Class E – Commercial, Business and Service**

- c) for the provision of the following kinds of services principally to visiting members of the public—
    - (i) financial services,
    - (ii) professional services (other than health or medical services), or
    - (iii) any other services which it is appropriate to provide in a commercial, business or service locality,
  - e) for the provision of medical or health services, principally to visiting members of the public, except the use of premises attached to the residence of the consultant or practitioner,
  - g) (i) for—an office to carry out any operational or administrative functions,
- 4.3 No alterations are proposed or required to the interior layout or the exterior of appearance of the building.
- 4.4 Full existing and proposed plans of the building are submitted with this application.



## RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

- 5.1 The adopted Local Development Plan is formed of the Worthing Local Plan 2023 City Plan Part 1 and the City Plan Part 2, and the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024). Relevant policies and guidance are summarised below.
- 5.2 The Worthing Local Plan 2023, which covers the period 2020–2036, was formally adopted on 28 March 2023. The Plan provides the statutory planning framework for development within the Borough, setting out policies for housing, employment, community facilities, the economy, and sustainable growth.
- 5.3 Within this framework, Policies DM8 (Community Facilities) and DM10 (Employment and Economic Growth) support the proposals for the application site.
- 5.4 **Policy DM8** generally supports development proposals involving the loss of community facilities where it is demonstrated that the facility is no longer needed, no longer viable, or can be satisfactorily re-provided elsewhere. This aligns with the application’s justification that the former use (Class F1 education) has ceased, and the building has remained vacant since 2020.
- 5.5 **Policy DM10** supports new commercial, business and office use within town centre locations, reflecting the Plan’s broader aim of promoting economic growth and strengthening the role of central Worthing as a focus for employment and service provision. This is consistent with the proposed change of use to Class E and the site’s confirmed position “*on the fringe of the town centre*”, close to major civic, commercial and employment use.
- 5.6 Together, these policies provide policy support for allowing the loss of the former community/educational function and the introduction of new Class E commercial/office uses in this sustainable central location.
- 5.7 The adopted Local Plan emphasises coordinated economic growth, efficient use of land, and supporting the vitality of town centres—all objectives that the proposal clearly aligns with, particularly as no external alterations are required and a viable ground-floor commercial unit will be provided by the proposed change of use.



## National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.8 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024) sets out the Government's most up to date policies against which all Development Plans should be prepared, and planning applications/appeals assessed. It is a material consideration carrying substantial weight.

Paragraph 8 of the framework sets out the three overarching objectives, which are as follows:

- *'An economic objective - to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure*
- *A social objective - to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and,*
- *An environmental objective - to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.'*

- 5.9 In addition to Local Plan support, the proposals align with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024), which forms a significant material consideration. Paragraph 8 of the NPPF sets out the three overarching objectives of sustainable development—economic, social and environmental—confirming that they are interdependent and should be pursued in mutually supportive ways.
- 5.10 The proposed change of use directly contributes to the economic objective by re-using an under-utilised urban building and supporting town-centre employment uses. It also supports the environmental and social objectives by ensuring the upkeep of this historic building in a conservation area.



## **6.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT**

6.1 The key material planning considerations relevant to this proposal are:

- The Principle of Development
- Heritage

### **Principle of Development**

6.2 The change of use is acceptable in principle. The loss of school use is justified through robust marketing evidence which demonstrates that there is no demand for a building of this size and configuration from a school provider.

6.3 The proposal would provide valuable small office space for SMEs in a highly sustainable town centre location.

6.4 The building has now been empty for several years and its future occupancy and active use is key to ensuring the building is maintained in good condition. This is particularly important given its location in the Chapel Road Conservation Area.

6.5 For these reasons the principle of the proposed development is acceptable

### **Heritage**

6.6 The site is located within the Chapel Road Conservation Area.

#### Identifying the Heritage Asset

6.7 The application site is an unlisted building located within the Conservation Area. While the building is not a listed heritage asset, it and its neighbouring buildings contribute to the Conservation Area's character and appearance of the area.

#### Describing the works proposed

6.8 The application seeks full planning permission for the change of use of the building to Class E (restricted). This requires no external alterations to the building.



### Impact of the Proposed Development on the Heritage Asset

- 6.9 The proposed development will have a positive impact on the Conservation Area by reason that no external changes are proposed to the building, and that securing a viable use for the building will ensure its maintenance and upkeep and contribution towards the Conservation Area.
- 6.10 The proposal therefore aligns with both national and local Planning policies, which seek to conserve and enhance heritage assets.
- 6.11 As identified, the building retains its external features which contribute to the high-quality townscape of the area. The lack of any proposed changes to the elevations ensures there would be no harm to heritage assets, and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area would be preserved.
- 6.12 The proposal complies with National policies contained within the NPPF and the Worthing Local Plan.



## **7.0 CONCLUSIONS**

- 7.1 The application is submitted of behalf The Trustees of Humphries Almshouse in support of the application for change of use of Provident House, 50 Grafton Road from a school use to a commercial office or similar.
- 7.2 The proposal will provide a viable class E unit that is suitable for a small business compatible with residential neighbours to occupy.
- 7.3 The site is on the fringe of the town centre, close to the main civic and commercial areas of Worthing. It is a sustainable location and well suited to small office or similar use.
- 7.4 The previous use of the building as a school is no longer viable and there is no demand from education providers for the building. This has been demonstrated in the Marketing Evidence which accompanies this application.
- 7.5 The proposed change of use will enable the building to be brought into active use which will help to secure its long-term maintenance, upkeep and appearance within the conservation area.
- 7.6 The proposed development is therefore considered acceptable in principle and satisfies all material planning considerations as set out in this statement.
- 7.7 In the light of this, the Council are requested to grant planning permission without undue delay.

***Lewis and Co Planning***  
***February 2026***