Expiry Date - 13/01/2025

Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/1088/24 **Recommendation – APPROVE**

Site: **19 Liverpool Gardens Worthing Central Worthing West Sussex**

Proposal: **Proposed change of use from Class E to Class F1 (Independent school)**

Date of site visit: 03.12.24

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: N

Site and Surroundings

The application site is situated on the north side of Liverpool Gardens close to the junction with Chapel Road. The property is currently vacant and comprises an older style terraced property over two floors. The property is situated at the back edge of the pavement and within a terrace of similar style properties. The property to the east turns the corner with Chapel Road and comprises a retail unit at ground floor.

The existing building comprises a suite of office rooms with a WC and kitchen on the first floor. The premises has three car parking spaces in the car park adjacent to the building.

The site is within the Chapel Road Conservation Area

Proposal

The application proposes the conversion of the building for use by an independent school for speech and language and occupational therapy to young persons who attend the main school at 58c Chapel Road. The space will be used as required.

The initial staff team will consist of:

1x administrator/receptionist
1x speech and language therapist
1x exams officer
1x SENco

The proposed hours are 8:30-4:30 Monday to Friday

There are no changes to the building proposed.

The children will keep the same arrival/departure routine that are currently in place with the existing school. It will be solely for children already placed with Educate U who will walk over for 1-1 speech, language and occupational health appointments.

The three parking spaces will be used by staff.

Relevant Planning History:

None relevant

Consultations:

WSCC Highways

WSCC asked the applicant for more information and we have been made aware that this application is not for a new school but for a new speech and language/occupational therapy area for the school. As such students will not be attending this part of the school by car but will walk from the main school on 58c Chapel Road for sessions as part of their school day.

The 3 parking spaces will be for staff that work in this part of the school, no pick up or drop offs take place from here. Therefore all internal school trips will be on foot.

No objection.

Adur and Worthing Councils

Environmental Health (PH) Subject to the hours of use as contained within the application, we have no comments.

Drainage Consultant WSP

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.**

The Worthing Society

No comments

Representations:

None received

Relevant Planning Policies

Worthing Local Plan policies (WBC 2023): SP1, DM5, DM8, DM13, DM22, DM24
National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG 2024)
National Planning Practice Guidance

Planning Assessment

Principle

Policy DM8 states:

a) The Council will support improvements to health, education, social, community and cultural facilities to ensure they meet the needs of local communities where it is demonstrated that there would be no unacceptable impact on the occupiers of adjacent properties
c) The Council will work with service providers to deliver appropriate facilities in accessible locations. Proposals by service providers for the delivery of facilities in appropriate locations to meet the needs generated by new development and existing communities will be supported in principle.

DM13 states

b) Changes of use and redevelopments within town, district and local centres will be carefully controlled to ensure that they support, rather than detract from, the successful functioning of the centres and their ability to meet local needs. according to their function in the hierarchy . When considering all such proposals regard will be had as to whether they would:
    i) Make a positive contribution to the vitality, viability and diversity of the centre;
    ii) Not unacceptably impact on daytime footfall;
    iii) Maintain a strong role for the centre in providing a varied range of convenience goods and meeting other day-to-day needs;
    iv) Positively restore and/or enhance the character and appearance of the frontage;
    v) Maintain the continuity of active frontages;
    vi) Be of a scale and type of use appropriate to the size and function of the centre, or part of the centre concerned;
    vii) Ensure that any proposal will cause no significant adverse effects for the occupiers of neighbouring properties;
    viii) Ensure that that there will be no severe negative impact on existing parking arrangements;
    ix) Retain or re-provides ancillary facilities within individual premises, (such as loading, storage, staff or administrative facilities), unless it is demonstrated that these are no longer necessary for appropriate future use of the premises;

x) Result in an over concentration of uses such as takeaways and other uses with closed and inactive street frontages. The Council will consider the role of the centre within which the proposal is located and other matters such as the numbers of existing similar uses within the frontage and any existing or potential issues. Permission will not be granted where harm to the vitality and viability of the centre, or the amenity of local residents and businesses, cannot be adequately mitigated;

xi) Require conditions to be applied to any new development where it is relevant and appropriate to do so, in order to control the proposed uses and allow for a managed approach to future proposals for change of use, in line with the Council's aspirations and strategies for the area.

The site is located within the Primary Shopping Area where retail uses are concentrated and separated into Primary Shopping and Secondary Shopping Frontage under Policy DM13 of the Worthing Local Plan. The site is identified as being Secondary Shopping Frontage. In relation to Worthing Town Centre Policy DM13 states:

Worthing Town Centre
Spatial Policy SS3 (Town Centre) sets out the overarching principles for the Town Centre and associated seafront and it is the starting point against which all proposed development in these areas will be assessed. The more detailed approach to frontages is set out below:

c) Primary Shopping Area (PSA) - a wider range of main town centre uses will be encouraged to bring people into the town and generate footfall throughout the day. In considering the most appropriate locations for proposed uses, the Council will use the identified Town Centre Character Areas as a tool to help assess whether a specific proposal would give rise to harm to the individual character or vision for each character area. The following sets out the approach to ground floor frontages within the 'Primary Shopping Area':

i) Primary Shopping Frontage (PSF) - will be the focus for retail uses within the centre The Council will seek to retain 65% of units in retail use to ensure that the centre retains its role as a sub-regional shopping centre and meets the shopping needs of the towns population. Uses such as Drinking Establishments and takeaways together with other uses that would detract from the overall shopping function of the frontage will be resisted

ii) Secondary Shopping Frontage (SSF) - a wider range of uses will be supported provided they are active uses with active shop fronts will enhance the vitality and viability and complement existing uses. However, uses such as takeaways and uses with closed and inactive street frontages will be resisted; and

iii) Town Centre Seafront Area - proposals that help to maintain and enhance an active and vibrant seafront will be supported. Eating, drinking and

shopping together with appropriate cultural and leisure uses will be retained and encouraged. However, uses such as takeaways and uses with closed and inactive street frontages will be resisted. particularly where they cause or contribute to an over-concentration of such uses.

d) Proposals that help develop and enhance the evening and night-time economy will be supported in the town centre where the operation of such activities can be controlled to address residential amenity implications and can demonstrate that such uses will add to the vitality and viability of the centre.

The site is within the Chapel Road South Character Area:

Chapel Road South / Guildbourne / Union Place South: Key town centre retail anchors, mainstream anchors, larger floor plate units, extended cinema provision and food and beverage leisure operators. To be located within a revised Primary Shopping Area following implementation.

The site is situated within the secondary shopping frontage and is currently offices. The building is currently vacant. Education establishments are appropriate town centre activities within accessible locations.

The building has commercial activities either side with offices and retail, it would bring back a building into use within the town centre and not have impact on the vitality or viability of the town centre or footfall. The principle of an educational use in this location is therefore considered to be appropriate in accordance with policy.

Visual Amenity

The proposed use would not involve any changes to the internal or external building. There would not be an impact on the conservation area.

Residential Amenity

The site is within a town centre location surrounded by commercial development. The applicant has indicated that the school would only be used between 8:30 and 4:30 Monday to Friday. In this commercial location it is not considered that the use would have an impact on residential amenity.

Highway Impacts

The site is within an accessible location within a couple hundred metres of the existing school in Chapel Road. The building will not be used to drop off children with children walking to the site when necessary. WSCC requested further information regarding access and parking which was provided and were satisfied that the proposal would not have an impact on the highway.

Other Matters

Although the application is for use class F1 (independent school), Use Class F1 entails a number of uses all of which are appropriate for this town centre location, its restriction to purely independent school is not therefore considered to be justified. It would however be appropriate to restrict its hours of opening to ensure that the use would be appropriate and would not impact on surrounding residential development. Longer hours than the school operates are considered appropriate in this Town Centre Location should the use change to an alternative use within F1

Recommendation

APPROVE subject to Conditions:-

1. Drawing Numbers
2. Standard time limit
3. Hours of use

Informative

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by identifying matters of concern within the application (as originally submitted) and negotiating, with the Applicant, acceptable amendments to the proposal to address those concerns. As a result, the Local Planning Authority has been able to grant planning permission for an acceptable proposal, in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

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

Case Officer: Jackie Fox Date: 29.01.25

Authorised by: Louise Prew Date: 29/01/2025