Development Management – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/1108/25 Recommendation: – Approve

Site: Flat 2 7 Abbotts Close Worthing West Sussex

Proposal: Conversion from two flats back to a single dwellinghouse (Flats 1 and 2)

Date of Site Visit: 18.11.2025

Neighbours Checked: Y

Additional Neighbours Notified: N

Site and Surroundings

The application site relates to a detached building located at the head of the cul-de-sac at Abbotts Close. The building is separated into two flats at ground floor and first floor level, known as flat 1 and flat 2. There is a driveway and detached garage in the south east corner of the site.

This is a predominantly residential area in close proximity to the town centre. There is a mix of dwelling types and designs in Abbots Close but are all detached properties. The site is one of three properties within the street that are located within the Richmond Road Conservation Area which continues to the south. Trees within the neighbouring gardens to the south and west are protected by TPO No. 15 of 1995, No.12 of 1978, and No. 53 of 2003.

Proposal

Permission is sought for the conversion of the building from two 2-bedroom flats to a single dwelling house. This would form a five bedroom dwelling. No external alterations are proposed.

The applicant has provided the following statement in support of the application:

We are proposing that the building be reinstated as a single family dwelling as per it's original design and purpose.

Although the two units are spacious, the arrangement of that converted space is not well suited to occupation by a family. The ground floor second bedroom is small and currently arranged as a utility space. The ground floor only has one bathroom/wc which are combined and only accessible via the kitchen. There is no separate wc should the bathroom be occupied for bathing etc.

When the house was converted in the 1950s, there were no leases so they are currently two freehold units with the division of facilities and mutual obligations covered by covenants rather than a lease document. This arrangement limits the access to a mortgage for any prospective purchaser and the individual value of the separate flats

is significantly higher than the average for 1/2 bedroom properties in this location due to the greater floor space. Therefore the two converted units would not, we feel, fall into the general affordable housing range; with houses and 2/3 bedroom flats being marketed in Worthing at this price level.

Also the split of the property garden and parking arrangements have suited the two sisters that occupied the building for the past 30 plus years, however are troublesome for two separate households due to the established rights of way and allocation of outdoor space. The ground floor lacks parking and the first floor lacks private outdoor space, however has a right of way through the garden and owns one of the outhouses, impeding private enjoyment by the ground floor of the garden.

As a single family dwelling there is adequate off road parking including a garage, however as two units the ground floor occupant would be restricted to on street parking adding to the pressures on such locally and limiting the amenity of the occupancy.

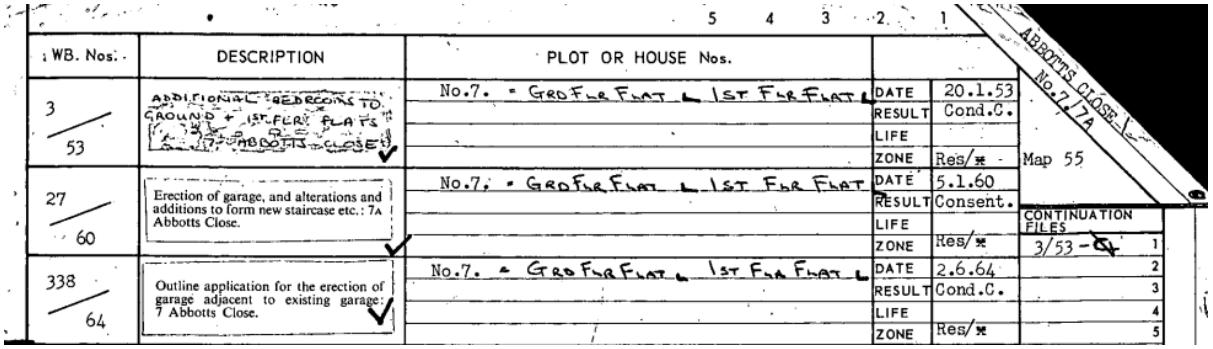
When converted in 1950s the soundproofing measures were minimal and again have been fine for two sisters living in linked households but would raise tensions between two unconnected occupants.

We do not believe that the two separate units provide suitable family accommodation and in fact ever since the conversion they have both been exclusively occupied by retired couples/widows downsizing from family homes, the attraction being the larger than average reception room and principal bedroom space. It is by reinstating the property into a single dwelling that it will work effectively as a family home.

Abbotts Close is predominately a road of single dwelling family homes and the reinstatement of number 7 would provide another opportunity for family residence in the road.

Relevant Planning History:

No recent history.



WB. Nos.	DESCRIPTION	PLOT OR HOUSE Nos.		
3/53	ADDITIONAL BEDROOMS TO GROUND + 1ST FLR FLATS 7 ABBOTTS CLOSE	No.7. = GRD FLR FLAT & 1ST FLR FLAT	DATE	20.1.53
			RESULT	Cond.C.
			LIFE	
			ZONE	Res/*
27/60	Erection of garage, and alterations and additions to form new staircase etc.: 7A Abbotts Close.	No.7. = GRD FLR FLAT & 1ST FLR FLAT	DATE	5.1.60
			RESULT	Consent.
			LIFE	
			ZONE	Res/*
338/64	Outline application for the erection of garage adjacent to existing garage: 7 Abbotts Close.	No.7. = GRD FLR FLAT & 1ST FLR FLAT	DATE	2.6.64
			RESULT	Cond.C.
			LIFE	
			ZONE	Res/*

ABBOTTS CLOSE No.7 7A

Map 55

CONTINUATION FILES 3/53 - A

Consultations

The **Highway Authority** has commented as follows:

This application is for the conversion from 2 flats back into a single dwelling. The site is located on Abbotts Close, an un-classified road subject to a speed limit of 30mph.

The proposal to revert the property back into a single dwelling house would not raise any highways safety concerns. The application form indicates that there are three parking spaces on the site frontage currently and the proposal does not alter the existing parking or access arrangements. The provision is considered sufficient for a dwelling of this size and location. The LPA may wish to secure bicycle storage for the proposed dwelling, if not already provided on site.

Conclusion
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 Worthing Society has confirmed no comments.

Southern Water has made the following comments:

Thank you for your correspondence, please see our comments below regarding the above application.
Insufficient Information provided

Condition
Construction of the development shall not commence until details of the proposed means of foul water drainage disposal have been submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with Southern Water.

Proposed soakaways
The Council's Building Control officers or technical staff should be asked to comment on the adequacy of soakaways to dispose of surface water from the proposed development. No new soakaways should be located within 5 metres of a public or adoptable gravity sewer, rising main or water main.
No Soakaways should be connected to the public surface water sewer.

Hierarchy of Building Regulations H3 for disposal of surface water - not yet provided documentation proving compliance
If the applicant has not already provided documentation demonstrating compliance with the surface water hierarchy reflected in part H3 of the Building Regulations, as shown below, we will require this to be provided where surface water is being considered for discharge to our network. Whilst reuse does not strictly form part of this hierarchy, Southern Water would encourage the consideration of reuse for new developments.
- Reuse
- Infiltration
- Watercourse
- Storm Sewer
- Combined Sewer
Guidance on Building Regulations is here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/drainage-and-waste-disposal-approved-document-h

We would like to engage with you on the design for disposal of surface water for this development at the earliest opportunity and we recommend that civil engineers and landscape architects work together and with Southern Water. In many cases this may negate or reduce the need for network reinforcement and allow earlier completion of the development.

Where a surface water connection to the foul or combined sewer is being considered, this should be agreed by the Lead Local Flood Authority, in consultation with Southern Water.

Condition
We request that should this application receive planning approval, the following condition is attached to the consent: Construction of the development shall not commence until details of the proposed means of surface water run off disposal in accordance with Part H3 of Building Regulations hierarchy as well as acceptable discharge points, rates and volumes have been agreed by the Lead Local Flood Authority, in consultation with Southern Water.
For further advice, please contact Southern Water, Southern House, Yeoman Road, Worthing, West Sussex, BN13 3NX (Tel: 0330 303 0119)
Website: southernwater.co.uk or by email at: SouthernWaterPlanning@southernwater.co.uk

The Council's **Drainage Consultant** has made the following comments:

Thank you for your consultation on the above site. We have reviewed the application as the drainage consultant acting on behalf of the Council and wish to make the following comments.

The applicant is applying for the conversion from 2no. flats back to 1no. single dwelling (Flats 1 and 2 ground, first and second floors). The application is to Worthing Borough Council.

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 Council's **Environmental Health Officer** has confirmed no adverse comments.

Representations

None received

Relevant Planning Policies:

Worthing Local Plan (WBC 2023): Policies:
SP1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development)
SS1 (Spatial Strategy)
DM1 (Housing Mix)
DM2 (Housing Density)

DM5 (Quality of the Built Environment)
DM15 (Sustainable Transport and Active Travel)
DM20 (Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage)
DM22 (Pollution)

National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG 2024)
National Planning Practice Guidance
SPD 'Space Standards' (WBC 2012)

Planning Assessment:

The planning history indicates that the use as two flats appears to date back to at least the 1950's when additional bedrooms were approved. The proposals would result in the loss of one residential unit. Policy DM1 seeks to resist the loss of existing homes and states that:

Planning applications that result in the loss of residential accommodation will not be permitted unless one or more of the following exceptions apply:

i) it can be demonstrated that the accommodation cannot be renovated to achieve satisfactory housing standards;

ii) the proposal would result in a net gain in units of affordable housing;

iii) the loss would enable residential units to be enlarged to meet residential space standards;

iv) the proposed change of use will provide a local community service/ facility that meets an identified need;

v) it can be demonstrated that a proposed change of use is the only practicable way of preserving the special architectural or historic interest of a listed building or other building of heritage significance; or

vi) applications for the conversion of flats or Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) back to family sized homes will be considered on their merits taking account of other considerations including, for example, amenity considerations and evidence regarding the need for family homes.

Criteria (vi) is the most relevant in this case relating to a conversion of the existing flats into a 5-bedroom dwelling house.

As set out in Worthing's Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), the trend for new dwellings has been for smaller units which "contributes to above average levels of overcrowding and constraints growth in family households". It is noted that there is a need for a mix of units and that 10-20% of market units should have four or more bedrooms. The updated SHMA (July 2025) suggested mix of housing by tenure for 4+ bedrooms is 15% and 2-bedrooms is 40%.

In terms of the existing accommodation, the lack of existing outdoor space for the first floor flat and layout/access issues as stated in the applicants supporting statement are acknowledged. It is also noted that as the flats were created in the 1950's it is unlikely that the conversion works would meet modern day insulation standards notably with regard to sound attenuation between the flat units.

Although the proposals would technically result in the net loss of 1 dwelling, there would be a net increase in the family housing stock as the proposal would provide a good sized 5-bedroom family house. The proposals would exceed the Governments minimum standards for a dwelling of this size and with access to ample private amenity space that would exceed the Council's minimum standard for rear gardens for houses.

The conversion would be achieved by internal alterations, resulting in a straightforward conversion and would have no significant visual impact, and its use as a single dwelling would be in keeping with the character of the area.

The site is located within a highly sustainable location close to the town centre with good access to local services and amenities and public transport connections.

The conversion would not cause any significant detrimental impact on neighbouring occupiers in terms of the intensity of use compared with the existing use as two flats.

There would be no changes to the existing parking and access arrangements with three car parking spaces indicated for the proposed dwelling. No objection has been raised by the Highway Authority. There is sufficient space for occupiers to accommodate their own cycle storage within the site. A compliance condition requiring at least one space to be provided is recommended.

In relation to drainage, Southern Water's comments are noted. However the application does not involve any significant alterations to the building and with no extensions or any increase in impermeable area proposed. Surface water drainage is indicated to be via a soakaway and the adequacy of any new soakaway, if required, would be controlled by the Building Regulations. The Council's Drainage Consultant has not raised any concerns and a condition is not considered necessary in this instance. In terms of foul water drainage, the application does not provide details but it is not considered reasonable to control this by condition given the scope of the application and that any new connection to the public sewer if necessary would be controlled by a formal application to Southern Water. An informative is recommended to advise of this requirement.

Conclusion

The reversion of this property to a single dwelling would be consistent with the character of the area. The property is well placed within easy walking distance of local services and facilities. A good standard of family housing would be provided for the future occupiers.

Therefore, on balance, notwithstanding the loss of a dwelling unit, it is considered that this is outweighed by the benefits of providing a good sized family home in a

sustainable location which would meet an identified need, and be consistent with the established suburban character of this locality, and the proposal can be accepted.

Recommendation:

APPROVE subject to conditions:-

1. Drawing Numbers
2. Standard time limit
3. Cycle parking

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 - application
- New address

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

Case Officer: Rebekah Hincke Date: 20.01.2026

Authorised by: Louise Prew Date: 20/01/2026