Development Management – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/0237/26 **Recommendation: Approve**

Site: **3 - 4 Liverpool Buildings Liverpool Road Worthing West Sussex**

Proposal: **Change of use of first floor from commercial (Use Class E) to one residential unit (Use Class C3); extension of extract flue to above eaves level; removal of rear staircase and alterations to fenestration**

Last visited: 24.03.2026

Neighbours Checked: Y Site notice posted 10.03.2026

Additional Neighbours Notified: Revised plans/red edge notified 29.07.2026

Site and Surroundings

The application site relates to No's 3-4 Liverpool Buildings located on the south east side of Liverpool Road. This is part of a 2-storey flat roofed 1950s brick built terrace at the eastern side of the entrance of the pedestrianised Montague Centre shopping arcade within the town centre. There is a café at ground floor level spanning across unit 3 and 4, and it is understood that the first floor to No.3 has previously included additional seating at first floor level but has more recently been marketed separately as offices but appears to be vacant at present. Stairs that once linked the ground and first floor internally also appear to have been removed at some stage since 2021, with the first floor accommodation accessed via an external staircase at the rear of the building. Access to the rear is via Bank Passage on the east side of the building where there is a service yard.

The site is within the Town Centre - Primary Shopping Frontage and is within the South Street Conservation Area.

Proposal

Permission is sought for the change of use of the first floor to form one residential unit and with alterations to the fenestration at the rear. This would include the installation of three new doors at ground floor level, to serve new bin and bike storage facilities, and two new aluminium windows at first floor level to replace the existing window and door. The existing rear extract flue would be extended above eaves level. The external staircase at the rear would also be removed.

Relevant Planning History:

NOTICE/0016/25 - Application for Prior Approval for Change of Use of first floor space above the existing retained Cafe for use as a 2no. Bedroom 4no. Person flat. with associated cycle and refuse storage at ground floor.
STATUS: Application Refused 27th October 2025.

AWDM/1207/25 - Removal of rear external steps and alterations to rear fenestration
STATUS: Pending Consideration .

AWDM/0156/21: Change of use of first-floor of 3-4 Liverpool Buildings from ancillary Class E to create 2no. residential units and associated external alterations. Granted 30/04/2021

AWDM/1080/20:

AWDM/0579/20: External alterations at ground and first floor, together with a part one-storey and part two-storey roof extension to provide 5 no. residential units in total (1 x 1 bed, 3 x 2 bed, 1 x studio) with private terraces and communal decks at second and third floor; retention of 2no. existing parking spaces for commercial use; refuse store at ground floor. Refused 02/06/2020

Consultations

Environmental Health:

It is a town centre location and the area is frequently noisy particularly late at night, with noise produced by pedestrians, street entertainment and from customers at various licensed venues in the nearby vicinity. There are also likely to be early morning deliveries to the retail outlets below and as such noise should be considered. Also as the proposed residential is over a commercial property and we will have to ensure that the sound insulation is sufficient. I would recommend the following conditions:

Construction work shall not commence until a scheme for protecting the proposed noise sensitive development from external noise has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. All works, which form part of the scheme, shall be completed before any part of the noise sensitive development is occupied. The scheme shall have regard to the principles contained within the World Health Organisation community noise guidelines and achieve the indoor ambient noise levels for dwellings specified in BS8233:2014. The scheme should include full details of glazing and ventilation strategy to prevent overheating, should windows need to be kept closed to meet the internal noise standards.

The use hereby permitted shall include a sound insulation scheme for protecting the upper floor residential unit from noise. The Scheme shall achieve a minimum airborne sound insulation value of 50dB (DnTw + Ctr dB). Following implementation of the insulation scheme, a test shall be undertaken to demonstrate that the attenuation measures carried out has achieved the minimum airborne sound insulation criteria. The use of the development shall not commence until test results, demonstrating the minimum sound insulation criteria has been achieved, has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority.

Private Sector Housing: No response

West Sussex County Council (Highways):

WSCC in its role as Local Highway Authority (LHA) has been consulted on highway matters by the Local Planning Authority (LPA) for the proposed change of use of first

floor from commercial (Use Class E) to one residential unit (Use Class C3) with associated works. The site is located on Liverpool Road, an unclassified road subject to a speed restriction of 20 mph.

For context, the LHA was previously consulted regarding highway matters for this site for application NOTICE/0016/25 (Application for Prior Approval for Change of Use of first floor space above the existing retained Cafe for use as a 2no. Bedroom 4no. Person flat. with associated cycle and refuse storage at ground floor), of which no highway safety or capacity concerns were raised. The LPA refused the application on grounds unrelated to highways.

For the current application, no vehicular access is associated with this site, whilst pedestrian access will be achieved from the rear of the site, accessed via Bank Passage. No traffic flow information has been provided with the current application; however, Class E uses tend to generate greater material movements than C3 residential. Therefore, the LHA does not anticipate that material movements associated with the site will exceed that of the existing.

No off-street vehicular parking provision is proposed – therefore, vehicular parking would have to be accommodated on-street or within nearby paid-for provision, as per the existing arrangement. Comprehensive parking restrictions are in place on nearby roads, prohibiting parking in places that would be detriment to highway safety. The LHA does not anticipate that the existing nil car parking provision would result in a highway safety concern. However, the LPA may wish to consider the potential impacts on on-street parking from an amenity point of view.

Weight is given to the fact that the site is situated in a sustainable town centre location within walking/cycle distance of local services, amenities, and public transport links. Cycling is a viable option in the area and the provision for the secure storage of bicycles has been demonstrated.

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.

WSP (as drainage consultant):

Following a review of the submitted information, we have noted that insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate safe access and egress for the development in terms of surface water flood risk. As stated in paragraph 44 of the PPG for flood risk and coastal change, “if the probability of inundation is high, safe access and escape should be maintained for the lifetime of the development”. Furthermore, paragraph 47 of the PPG states “wherever possible, safe access routes should be provided that are located above design flood levels and which avoid flow paths. Where this is not possible, limited depths of flooding may be acceptable, provided that the proposed access is designed with appropriate signage etc. to make it safe. The acceptable flood depth for safe access will vary depending on flood velocities and the risk of debris within the flood water. Even low levels of flooding can pose a risk to

people in situ (because of, for example, the presence of unseen hazards and contaminants in floodwater, or the risk that people remaining may require medical attention)". Therefore, the applicant should demonstrate that surface water flood depths are acceptable and allow for safe access and egress for users of the site. A mapped route of safe access and egress avoiding flooding from all sources should be provided.
We would recommend the application is not approved until updated information is received that addresses the above points.
Reason To prevent flooding in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 165-175 by ensuring the satisfactory management of local flood risk, surface water flow paths, storage, and disposal of surface water from the site in a range of rainfall events and ensuring the SuDS proposed operates as designed for the lifetime of the development.

Following a safe access and egress plan the following comments were provided:

Following a review of the updated information, we note that safe access routes have be mapped for surface water flooding. Therefore, sufficient information has been received to address our previous comments and we would recommend the approval of the application.

Waste Services: No response

Southern Water: Southern Water has determined that the flow rate for the above site will remain consistent, so capacity is not an issue, and no Southern Water assets will be affected. Therefore, Southern Water has no objections to this proposal.

The Worthing Society:

I have now had the opportunity to discuss the application with our Heritage Team. We have no objection, in principle, to the change of use to residential accommodation which could be an improvement. However, we have noted the comments of the Senior Environmental Health Officer regarding the need for sound proofing and the advice of the WSP Report regarding the flood risk assessment, which will also need to be considered. In conclusion, we also suggest that Aluminium window frames would be much more suitable given the building is within the South Street CA.

Representations

None received

Relevant Planning Policies:

Worthing Local Plan 2020-2036 (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)
DM9 (Delivering infrastructure)

DM13 (Retail and town centre uses)
DM15 (Sustainable Transport and Active Travel)
DM16 (Sustainable Design)
DM17 (Energy)
DM20 (Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage)
DM22 (Pollution)
DM24 (The Historic environment)

National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG 2026)
National Planning Practice Guidance
SPD 'Space Standards' (WBC 2012)
SDP 'A Guide to Residential Development' (WBC 2013)
CIL Charging Schedule (Aug 2021)
Technical Housing Standards – Nationally described space standard (2015)
Conservation Area Appraisal

Planning Assessment:

Principle of development

The application form indicates the current use is Use Eb – sale of food and drink mostly on the premises. It is noted that the first floor is currently accessed from the rear and has no internal link with the ground floor retail unit. The planning history shows that the first floor was Use Eb. An internal stair in unit 3 in the 2021 application is not shown within the existing plans.

Policy DM13f sets out that "the efficient and effective use of the upper floors that add to the vitality and viability of centres will be encouraged subject to: i) the proposed use of the upper floor will not undermine the viability of the unit on the ground floor particularly those retail uses; ii) consideration will be given to the nature of the use, its appropriateness to the centre in which it is proposed, hours of operation, intensity of use and impact on nearby uses"

There is established planning history of the change of use of this floor space to residential. The first floor has been physically separated from the ground floor so the application wouldn't undermine the viability of the ground floor unit. Residential is a permitted use within the town centre. Its impact on nearby uses will be assessed within the standard of accommodation section noting that the agent of change principle will be applied.

The provision of one residential unit will make a small contribution to housing supply. The principle of the change of use to residential is therefore considered acceptable.

Visual Amenity

The alterations would be at the rear of the building within the service yard area. Bank Passage to the rear of the site is adopted highway. The proposed removal of the external staircase would reduce clutter.

The application has been amended and proposes aluminium windows to the rear instead of the originally proposed uPVC. The elevations have been updated with full details to be sought by condition subject to the assessment of overheating outlined below. One of the proposed windows would be smaller than the existing due to the need to provide space for the extended flue and this is acceptable.

The flue extension is reasonable in the context of this site, and the positioning at the rear within the service area would limit the impact on the wider conservation area.

On this basis it is considered that there would be no significant harm to the character of the building or to the special qualities of the wider conservation area.

Standard of accommodation

The proposed unit would have one-bedroom for two people and an overall floor area of 103sqm. This is above the Technical housing standard required of 50sqm. The double bedroom meets the size requirements and storage is shown. The application was previously proposed as a two-bedroom unit but altered due to issues related to where internal walls could be placed.

Habitable rooms face towards Montague Centre where large windows provide light and outlook.

In terms of potential noise and disturbance to future occupiers in view of the town centre location where late-night noise can be frequent, a condition is recommended for a scheme to protect the dwelling from external noise in the interests of residential amenity. Sound insulation to protect the unit from noise from commercial properties, particularly the café below is also recommended.

Residential Amenity

In relation to the external alterations, it is considered that there would be no unacceptable impact on the amenities of neighbouring occupiers as a result of the proposals. The use as residential is in accordance with other neighbouring properties.

The extended flue would discharge above eaves level to protect the residents from odour.

Flooding/Drainage

The site is in Flood Zone 1 and at risk from surface water flooding. WSP (as the council's drainage consultant) requested additional information to demonstrate safe access and egress for the development in terms of surface water flood risk. The document provided has been reviewed by WSP who are satisfied with the information. The scheme is considered to be appropriate in terms of flooding risk.

Transport and servicing

No off-street vehicular parking provision is proposed – therefore, vehicular parking would have to be accommodated on-street or within nearby paid-for provision, as per the existing arrangement. Comprehensive parking restrictions are in place on nearby

roads, prohibiting parking in places that would be detriment to highway safety. The existing nil car parking provision would not result in a highway safety concern.

Weight is given to the fact that the site is situated in a sustainable town centre location within walking/cycle distance of local services, amenities, and public transport links. Cycling is a viable option in the area and the provision for the secure storage of bicycles has been demonstrated on the ground floor.

Bin storage would be provided at the rear of the ground floor for the proposed flat and an adjacent internal area allocated to the ground floor cafe unit which would improve the current arrangements where bins are stored outside the café.

Sustainability

The proposal makes use of an underutilised existing commercial space which is inherently sustainable. No other details of sustainable measures have been provided with the application. A condition will be included for details to be submitted to include measures to reduce water use and require a minimum EPC C.

Community Infrastructre Levy

The application is CIL liable and the vacancy test will be applied.

Recommendation:

APPROVE subject to condition(s):-

1. Drawing Numbers
2. Standard time limit
3. Sections of windows to be provided
4. External noise scheme
5. Sound insulation
6. Bike parking and bin store
7. Sustainability measures

Informative

1. Approved following revisions
2. CIL
3. Naming and numbering

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

Case Officer: Louise Prew Date: 04/11/2026

Authorised by: Peter Barnett Date: 4 November 2026