

Development Management – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWD/0520/26

Recommendation: – APPROVE

Site: The Hollies 83 Little High Street Worthing West Sussex

Proposal: Application for Certificate of Lawfulness for the Existing use of the property as an office (Class E)

Date of Site Visit: NA

Neighbours Checked: NA

Additional Neighbours Notified: NA

Site and Surroundings

The Hollies is a grade II listed building on the corner of Little High St. It is within Little High St Conservation Area.

Proposal

The application seeks confirmation that the use as a social centre ceased more than 10 years ago and that the building has been in continuous operation as an office (Use Class E) since that time.

The application is supported by three witness statements from a building manager, the applicant's daughter and a contractor. Various other leases, bills and letters have been provided in support.

Relevant Planning History:

01/00708/LBC - Application for Listed Building Consent for alterations to existing garage/store to form games and utility rooms including alterations to fenestration (windows and doors), formation of moulded parapet and smooth render to north, east and south walls, removal of timber gates and adjacent wall and install 2 x 1.8 metre metal gates.

STATUS: Conditional Consent 22nd August 2001.

01/00709/FULL - Alterations to existing garage/store to form games and utility rooms including alterations to fenestration (windows and doors), formation of moulded parapet and smooth render to north, east and south walls, removal of timber gates and adjacent wall and install 2 x 1.8 metre metal gates.

STATUS: Conditional Consent 22nd August 2001.

93/05328/FULL - CHANGE OF USE TO CLASS B1 (BUSINESS USE); FORMATION OF HARDSTANDING AND EXTENSION TO BOUNDARY WALL

STATUS: Application Permitted 14th January 1994.

93/05329/LBC - APPLICATION FOR LISTED BUILDING CONSENT FOR DEMOLITION OF EXISTING DOUBLE GARAGE; FORMATION OF HARDSTANDING AND EXTENSION TO BOUNDARY WALL

STATUS: Conditional Consent 14th January 1994.

94/05349/FULL - CHANGE OF USE FROM OFFICES TO SOCIAL CENTRE FOR PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

STATUS: Conditional Consent 25th May 1994.

94/05350/FULL - CHANGE OF USE OF STORE ADJOINING EXISTING DAY CENTRE TO A CHARITY SHOP

STATUS: Conditional Consent 19th October 1994.

95/05330/FULL - APPLICATION TO VARY CONDITION 3 OF PLANNING CONSENT WB/94/0227 TO EXTEND OPENING HOURS TO 9.00 PM MONDAY TO FRIDAY

STATUS: Conditional Consent 26th April 1995.

96/05370/FULL - APPLICATION FOR CONTINUED USE OF PREMISES AS A SOCIAL CENTRE FOR PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS (CONSENT REFERENCE WB/94/0227 REFERS). PERMANENT PERMISSION SOUGHT

STATUS: Conditional Consent 10th April 1996.

96/05829/FULL - APPLICATION FOR WORKS COMPRISING OF RE-SURFACING YARD, REPLACEMENT OF YARD GATES AND REPLACEMENT OF KITCHEN WINDOW WITH FRENCH DOORS

STATUS: Conditional Consent 14th August 1996.

96/05830/LBC - APPLICATION FOR LISTED BUILDING CONSENT FOR WORKS COMPRISING OF RE-SURFACING YARD, RE-SURFACING YARD, REPLACEMENT OF YARD GATES, REPLACEMENT OF KITCHEN WINDOW WITH FRENCH DOORS, RE-FITTING

STATUS: Conditional Consent 14th August 1996.

96/05831/LBC - RETROSPECTIVE APPLICATION FOR LISTED BUILDING CONSENT FOR THE REMOVAL OF TWO FIRE SURROUNDS AND SEAL FLUES ON THE FIRST FLOOR

STATUS: 28th November 1996.

07/0875/LBC - Application for Listed Building Consent for the installation of a smoking shelter in front garden area.

STATUS: Conditional Consent 19th September 2007.

07/0876/FULL - Provision of a smoking shelter in front garden area.

STATUS: Conditional Consent 19th September 2007.

AWDM/0006/12 - Change of use

STATUS: Application Returned .

AWDM/1360/15 - Change of use from office to mixed use office and yoga studio with associated internal alterations.

STATUS: Application Returned .

AWDM/1362/15 -

STATUS: Application Returned .

AWDM/0263/20 -

STATUS: Application Returned .

AWDM/0374/20 - Listed Building Consent for internal alterations including relocation of kitchen and conversion of wcs into shower rooms

STATUS: Application Permitted 20th May 2021.

AWDM/1100/22 - Listed Building consent to remove and rebuild 2no. chimneys on West elevation

STATUS: Application Permitted 18th October 2022.

AWDM/1118/22 - Remove and rebuild 2no. chimneys on West elevation

STATUS: Application Permitted 18th October 2022.

AWDM/1450/25 - Change of use to a single dwelling house (Use Class C3).

STATUS: Application Refused 3rd March 2026.

AWDM/1451/25 - Application for Listed Building Consent for Change of use to a single dwelling house (Use Class C3) and allied internal alterations.

STATUS: Application Returned .

Consultations

None

Neighbour Representations

None

Planning assessment

In March 2026 a planning application was refused for the change of use to residential as it was not considered that the loss of the social centre (granted permission in 1996 with a restrictive condition) was adequately justified.

This application seeks to address this by providing evidence that the social centre has ceased more than 10 years before the date of this permission.

What is clear from the supporting evidence is that the applicant Matthew Dowling, purchased the Hollies in 2012 (solicitor's letter September 2012). The applicant's

solicitor correspondence of the time. Since then it appears that a number of businesses have operated from the premises. These include:

Domestic Energy Assessors - a five year lease for office use from October 2012 – 2017.

Black Box Energy Ltd – a ten year lease also as an office from May 2015 - 2020. Including the company name and address at this building. This is supported by a Companies House entry of May 2015, registering this new company address.

One Skin Products - a five year lease for office use from May 2022 – 2027, also including the company name and address at this building.

Planning advice via emails in 2013/14, the year after Mr Dowling's purchase refers to B1 office as the existing class of use at that time. Rate demand evidence in 2022/3 is more recent but consistent with this, describing the building as office and premises.

Invoices naming business at the address between 2013 (Epoda Ltd.) to 2018 (Black Box Energy) refer to goods purchased or services provided. A wellness clinic in the east of the building in 2022 is also evidenced by photographs. Planning/listed building approvals from Worthing Borough Council at this time support the applicant's statement that building repair works have also been undertaken during the period 2022/23, which they state did not signify cessation of the office use.

A charge against a loan secured against the property in 2014, refers to Mathew Dowling Property in statement between 2024 – 2026, which also refers to a commercial loan. This evidence is of limited weight but does not conflict with lease information.

Submitted and online information indicates that the that the site is currently marketed by Spratt & Sons, previously by Stiles, Harold, Williams, showing the interior arranged and furnished as offices.

The applicant and three witness statements, and two employees and daughter, (albeit not witnessed nor with reference to the statutory declaration act), state that they have known the premises as an office for business use since at least 2012.

There is no evidence to suggest other uses of the building during the period to which the evidence relates.

Recommendation:

The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that on the balance of probabilities the change of use from a social centre to commercial Use Class E occurred more than...

10 years ago. The use of the building can now be considered to be Use Class E (Commercial, business and service) and is lawful for planning purposes.

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

Case Officer: Louise Prew Date: 20/08/2026

Authorised by: Stephen Cantwell Date: 20/08/2026