Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/0972/25 Recommendation: Approve

Site: 7 Farncombe Road, Worthing

Proposal: **Change of use from residential garage to a commercial catering kitchen (Use Class Egiii) with ventilation system including roof cowl, new doors and other fenestration alterations**

Date of site visit: 16.09.2025

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: N Site notice posted 16.09.2025

Proposal, Site and Surroundings

The application site relates to a detached two storey Victorian villa located on the west side of Farncombe Road. The property comprises of a single dwelling house and has been extended to the rear with a part single/part two storey extension and there is a garage attached to the south side elevation. The site has an in and out driveway access. The site is within the Farncombe Road Conservation Area and is within a Protected Key Employment area where local plan policy DM11 applies to existing employment uses. The site is within a controlled parking zone restricting parking to residents only between 10-11am and 2-3pm.

Permission is sought for the conversion of the garage building and its change of use to form a commercial catering kitchen which has been described as a home run business. This would include extract/ventilation equipment. Alterations to insulate the building are indicated including replacing the flat roof and the parapet wall would be built up to a height of 2.86 metres to the front elevation in brickwork, which would replace the existing timber fascia treatment. A protruding rooflight is proposed and a roof cowl would also protrude above the flat roof. Replacement garage doors would be installed to the front (east) elevation which would be hardwood with glazing inserted to their top section. Bin storage has been indicated on a revised plan to be located to the north side of the dwelling, enclosed behind the existing wall and gate.

Further information has been requested in relation to the operation of the commercial catering business and the following extract is from the applicant's subsequent supporting statement:

2. Nature of the Commercial Catering Use
EC Food and Wine Limited is a small, established catering business specialising in canapés, mains, and desserts, predominantly for weddings and private events. All events take place off-site. The premises will be used solely as a food preparation kitchen; there is no retail or public-facing use.

3. Hours of Operation
The kitchen will be used on weekdays only, as events generally take place at weekends. Typical operating hours are: • Tuesdays & Wednesdays: 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. • Thursdays & Fridays: 8:00 a.m. – 8:30 p.m. Hours vary depending on event size but do not exceed those stated above.

4. Connection to the Dwelling & Business Operators
No. 7 Farncombe Road is owned and occupied by the applicants' parents. The business is operated solely by their two daughters, Elizabeth and Charlotte Caton, who have worked together as caterers for over twelve years. There are no employees and no third-party operators involved.

5. Previous Business Operation
The business has successfully operated for twelve years from a commercial kitchen installed within an outbuilding at Pond House, Isfield, East Sussex, TN22 5TY. During this time there have been no complaints regarding noise, odour, or disturbance, demonstrating the low-impact nature of the operation.

6. Cooking Methods & Odour Control
Cooking is limited to hob and oven use only, including baking, roasting, and sauce preparation. There are no fryers and no high-grease cooking processes proposed. These methods are consistent with the submitted DEFRA Risk Assessment, which demonstrates how any potential odour or grease will be mitigated through appropriate ventilation and filtration.

7. Deliveries & Transport
Deliveries relate solely to food ingredients and supplies. During the busiest summer period, there may be a maximum of four deliveries per week, typically on Wednesdays, Thursdays, or Fridays. Each delivery lasts approximately 5–10 minutes. Prepared food deliveries to event venues are seasonal and undertaken by the business operators using a small van, parked on-site only on delivery days. The operators live approximately a five-minute walk from the premises and therefore do not commute by vehicle.

8. Client Visits & Food Tastings
The kitchen is primarily used for food preparation. Occasional food tastings take place strictly by appointment only, typically involving couples (two people at a time). Tastings occur predominantly in the autumn and winter months, with a maximum frequency of two tastings every three weeks, each lasting approximately one hour.

9. Local Context & Intensity of Use
The site is located on a road that also accommodates a care home, two children's nurseries, and a probation office. Given the limited number of visitors, deliveries, and the seasonal nature of the business, the level of activity is considered comparable to or less than existing uses within the area.

10. Bin Storage
Bin storage will be relocated away from the site frontage in recognition of the site's sensitive conservation area setting. The preferred location is to the north side of the building, close to the garage operation, where bins can be screened by mature

shrubbery and enclosed within a temporary timber structure to match the proposed frontage. Should this not be acceptable, bins can alternatively be located further along the side of the building behind the side gate. A revised bin storage drawing will supersede drawing no. 19243-L-2.

Relevant Planning History:

AWDM/1523/13 - Two-storey pitched roof rear extension with rear balcony; demolition of side lean-to and erection of replacement porch.
STATUS: APP 28th January 2014.

AWDM/1063/17 - Two-storey pitched roof rear extension with rear balcony; demolition of side lean-to and erection of replacement porch.
STATUS: APP 2nd November 2017.

Consultations:

The **Highway Authority** has raised no objection and comments as follows:

This application seeks the change of use of residential garage to commercial catering kitchen (Use Class Egiii) with associated works. The site is located on Farncombe Road, a C-classified road subject to a speed restriction of 30 mph.

The submitted Supporting Statement states that the proposed use will host a catering kitchen for a home run business use for cooking and preparation for off-site events and activities. Considering the scale of the proposed use, the LHA does not anticipate that the proposals would give rise to a significant material intensification of movements on the local highway network.

The use of the garage for parking will be lost as part of the proposals. However, the site does benefit from an existing driveway, which appears of suitable size to serve the needs of the host dwelling and proposed use. Access arrangements will remain unchanged.

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.

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/surface water drainage disposal have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning 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

Worthing Society has made the following comments:

Thank you for requesting our comments in respect of the above application which relates to a detached Victorian villa located in the Farncombe Road Conservation Area (CA). The building is recorded on the Council's Local Interest List. This is primarily a residential area and the character is defined by its large villas, as referred to in the 'Conservation Area Appraisal Document'.

I have now had the opportunity to discuss the application with our Heritage Team. Firstly, we found the application form confusing as implies that there would be a change of use of the whole building, not just the garage. This needs to be clarified. We assume that the proposal is meant to just relate to the garage but, in our view, this needs to be clarified.

Although the design of the garage doors appears acceptable, we consider that the proposal would involve noticeable industrialisation of the site, including the extractor and roof cowl, the stationing of a commercial waste bin and delivery movements in and out of the premises. This could also adversely affect the amenity of near residents.

In summary, we consider the change of use would be harmful to the Conservation Area, which still retains a residential character. This would not be consistent with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Therefore, for the reasons stated, the Society objects to this application.

The Council's **Environmental Health** Officer has recommended the following conditions:

- The extraction equipment listed in this application shall be installed before the use hereby permitted commences and thereafter shall be maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

- Deliveries and collections to/from the commercial units shall only be made between the hours of 07.00 and 20.00 Monday to Saturday and 09.00 to 18.00 on Sundays. Reason: To safeguard the residential amenity of the area.

In the absence of any details relating to the house of operation, I would also ask that you consider imposing a condition on the hours of use to prevent the disturbance of the surrounding residential properties.

The Council's **Drainage consultant** has confirmed no objection on surface water grounds.

Representations:

Two representations have been received from the occupiers of No.8 Farncombe Road to the east and Flat 2 24 Madeira Avenue which is to the rear of the site objecting to the application on the following grounds as summarised:

- Insufficient information provided
- Inaccuracies in the application
- Hours of operation have not been indicated
- Work has already commenced with structural alterations to the property
- Commercial catering enterprise would be contrary to the quiet residential character of the area
- Loss of amenity – increase in noise, disturbance, ventilation cowl and associated odours would spoil quality of life, enjoyment and peaceful attractiveness of the area
- Doors and windows are openable and garage is only single-skinned – noise and odour concerns
- Potential for use to evolve
- Hedges and fencing to rear boundary have been recently removed impacting on privacy and landscape character

Relevant Planning Policies

Worthing Local Plan policies (WBC 2023): SP1, DM5, DM10, DM11, DM15, DM22
National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG 2024)
National Planning Practice Guidance
SPG 'Extending or Altering Your Home' (WBC)

Planning Assessment

There are no specific Local Plan policies relating to home-working but the NPPF states that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. However, it is noted that the application does not propose a typical home-working arrangement as the business would not be operated directly by the occupiers of No.7. Instead the use would be operated by the occupiers' daughters who do not live at No. 7. Nevertheless, the proposal would help meet the needs of the current business which it is understood has previously operated from an outbuilding at the parent's former home, and in turn this would contribute to the aims of Local Plan Policy DM10 in supporting a strong, sustainable and diverse local economy.

The key considerations would be the effects on the visual and residential amenities of the locality and on parking and highway safety.

Residential Amenity

The main impact would be to the occupiers of the immediate neighbouring dwellings to each side of the site at No. 5 and No.9 Farncombe Road, dwellings to the rear in Madeira Avenue and those on the opposite side of Farncombe Road.

Whilst this is a predominantly residential area, it is noted that there are commercial uses within Farncombe Road and in the vicinity of the site which generate mainly daytime activity.

The main sources of potential noise and disturbance associated with the operation of the proposed business would be such as through use of equipment, customer and employee conversation, and from potential comings and goings from deliveries and customer visits to the premises.

It is understood that the business would operate from Tuesday to Friday and would be by the occupiers two daughters. For the majority of the operation the number of persons within the premises would be limited to the two business operators, and comings and goings would be limited by there being no other persons employed at the premises and customer visits to the premises are limited to tastings and these are described as being occasional – 'at most twice every three weeks in the autumn/winter months only' and lasting approximately 1 hour. Food deliveries have been indicated to being limited to a maximum of four per week during peak times and being approximately 5-10 minutes in duration. The information provided in the applicant's statement indicates overall that the intensity of the use would be relatively low key in terms of the number of comings and goings and customer visits very limited.

Whilst the existing garage is closely sited to the boundary with the neighbouring dwelling at No.5 to the south and there are windows within the side wall of No.5 facing the application site, it is noted that there is a separation distance of between 4-4.5 metres and there are no side windows proposed to the converted garage, and No.9 to the immediate north and other nearby dwellings to the front and rear are more remote from the existing garage building and to the proposed business use.

In terms of noise and odours associated with cooking, it is noted that cooking is limited to hob and oven use with no fryers. The application includes extract and ventilation equipment, and the Environmental Health Officer is satisfied with the information provided and has not raised any objections to the proposals subject to ensuring that the extraction equipment is fully installed before the use commences and thereafter maintained which can be secured by condition. He also recommends limited delivery hours and hours of operation and conditions can be applied to limit these in the interests of protecting amenity. Although some evening working has been indicated on Thursdays and Fridays, this would cease by 8.30pm and given the surrounding character of the area it is considered that this would not be unreasonable given the scale of the proposed use overall.

Whilst it is acknowledged that windows and doors would be openable, given the level of and nature of the business activity and separation with neighbouring dwellings it is considered that this would not pose any significant threat to residential amenity and the specific operation of the business as detailed in the applicant's statement can be secured by condition to protect residential amenity.

There would be no significant impact arising from the external alterations proposed given their limited scope in the context of the existing building and the relationship with neighbouring buildings.

Having regard to the intensity of the use and scope of alterations, and in the absence of any objection from the Environmental Health Officer the impact on the amenities of neighbouring occupiers is considered acceptable in the circumstances of this case subject to the recommended conditions as outlined.

Visual Amenity and impact on the Conservation Area

The external changes to the garage would be visible from the site frontage but the garage itself is set back, and those changes that would be more readily visible would be limited to the building up of the parapet wall and replacement of the garage doors with timber doors. It is acknowledged that the existing garage is not particularly sympathetic in its appearance and whilst the overall appearance as a flat roofed garage building would be similar to the existing structure, there would be some apparent improvement in terms of the design and detailing of the garage doors. The use of matching materials for the alterations would help blend with the recipient building and can be secured by condition.

Whilst the rooflight, and proposed cowl in particular would protrude above the flat roof height, the positioning set back from the edges of the roof and from the front of the garage would limit its visibility and it is considered that this would not appear as a prominent feature and views from a public vantage point limited by the angle of view above the parapet.

The applicant has agreed to revise the bin storage to set it away from the site frontage. This would be at the side of the dwelling where it would be screened behind the existing wall and gate enclosure to minimise the impact on visual amenity.

On balance it is considered that given the limited visual impact arising from the proposed use or alterations there would be no significant harm to the character and special qualities of the building and wider conservation area.

Access and Highways

The proposed development would result in the loss of the garage for parking but the Highway Authority raises no concerns regarding loss of parking provision and the existing driveway would be retained to provide adequate parking for the dwelling and business use. The Highway Authority has raised no objections in terms of parking, access or highway safety.

Recommendation

APPROVE subject to Conditions:-

1. Drawing Numbers
2. Standard time limit
3. Foul/surface water drainage details to be agreed and implemented
4. Install and maintain kitchen ventilation/extraction system in accordance with submitted details and manufacturer’s recommendations

5. Catering business shall not be operated other than from the converted garage as indicated on the approved plans and shall operate in accordance with the Consolidated Supporting Statement dated December 2025
6. Hours of operation limited to Tuesday to Wednesday between 09.00 to 17.00 and Thursday to Friday between 08:00 and 20:30
7. Deliveries and collections to/from the commercial premises limited to between the 07.00 and 20.00 Monday to Saturday and 09.00 to 18.00 on Sundays
8. Bin storage to be implemented as indicated
9. No further openings to converted garage building

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? Y

Case Officer: Rebekah Hincke Date: 29.01.2026

Authorised by: Louise Prew Date: 03/02/2026