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Planning Department
Worthing Borough Council
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BN11 1HA

22 May 2025
Ref: JC/Let/P2253

Dear Sir / Madam,

Application for change of use from children's day care to office and ancillary storage at 1-3 Birkdale Road, Worthing, West Sussex, BN13 2QY

On behalf of the applicant, **Simpson Electrical**, ECE Planning Ltd has been instructed to prepare a planning application for the change of use from day care to office at 1 – 3 Road, Worthing, West Sussex, BN13 2QY.

This Application has been submitted online via the Planning Portal and includes the following documents/drawings:

- **Planning Application and CIL Forms**
- **Planning Covering Letter**
- **Architectural Pack inc. Location and Block Plans**

The Site

The site comprises an approximately 500m^2 plot of land within Worthing's built-up area boundary. It is bounded by Birkdale Road to the north, 85-91 Durrington Road to the east, 83 Durrington Road to the south, and 5 Birkenhead Road to the west.

On the site sits a building, originally built as a worship space and currently in use as a children's care facility. There are also two small outbuildings on the site: a summer house and small storage shed. Information on the planning background of these is detailed in the planning history section of this letter.

The remaining area of the site is of hardstanding, with some planting areas along portions of the northern and eastern boundaries.

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Figure 1 - Map of flood risk from a 1 in 100 flood event

The site located in Flood Zone 1, meaning there is a low probability of flooding. There is no identified risk of flooding from rivers or the sea. Surface water flooding is not identified to be an issue on the site or adjacent land, with the nearest 1 in 100 flood event being approximately 60 metres from the site.

Planning History

A search of the Council's planning application register has been undertaken and reveals the following applications of relevance to the site:

AWDM/0846/14 - Erection of metal shed in frontage adjacent to main entrance (3m x 1.9m) (Approved 26 September 2014)

AWDM/0044/14 - Retention of detached summerhouse in grounds for use as activity space and erection of close-boarded timber fencing (above existing boundary fence) to a height of 2.3 metres to rear of 85 Durrington Lane (Approved 23 April 2014)

AWDM/0294/11 - AWDM/0294/11 | Proposed single storey rear extension and alterations to front elevation including proposed porch. Deletion of condition 7 and 8 of planning permission WB/0273/90 relating to occupancy of the premises (Approved 11 September 2011)

The above applications detail alterations to the building, and additional outbuildings. The latter of these applications also removed conditions relating to occupancy of the premises.

02/00725/FULL - Application to remove condition 9 of planning consent WB/273/90 restricting the number of persons occupying the meeting hall (Approved 4 September 2002)

99/00352/FULL - Application for variation of condition 9 of planning consent WB/273/90 dated 22nd May 1990 (as amended by planning permission No.WB/92/0175 dated 28th April 1992) to increase the number of persons occupying the meeting hall to 65 (Approved 21 June 1999)

92/05058/FULL - Application for removal of condition 9 of planning consent WB/273/90 dated 22.5.90 which restricts the number of people occupying the meeting hall to 35 (Approved 30 April 1992)

The above applications sought consent for variation of a condition restricting the number persons permitted to occupy the building under its previous use as a meeting hall. This condition was applied to permission under reference **WB/273/90**, which predates the council's digital records.

The Proposal

This application seeks consent for the change of use of the existing building at 1-3 Birkdale Road from its current use as a day care facility for children with learning disabilities to office use by Simpson Electrical.

The proposals are to not to include any external alterations to the fabric of the building. Internal renovations are proposed to make the building suitable for use as an office.

The external hardstanding is to remain as existing for use as on site parking for staff, providing approximately 4no. spaces.

Planning Policy Overview

The National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was newly revised in December 2024 and is a material consideration in all planning applications.

The relevant sections of the NPPF relate to the presumption in favour of sustainable development; building a strong and competitive economy; making effective use of land; meeting the challenge of climate change; flooding and costal change.

It is contended that the proposed scheme is entirely compliant with the relevant paragraphs of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Worthing Local Plan (2023)

The Worthing Local Plan was adopted in Match 2023 and sets out the strategic vision and objectives for the Borough. The relevant policies of the Local Plan have been considered in the preparation of this application

Planning Appraisal

The Principle of Development

This application seeks consent for the change of use of a building from children's day care to office. The main concern of such a change of use would be the loss of community infrastructure. Policy DM8 of the Worthing Local Plan (2023) elaborates on when such a loss may be acceptable, particularly part e), which states that:

'Development which would result in the loss of community facilities will normally be resisted and will only be permitted where:
i) an accessible replacement facility of a similar nature is provided that meets the needs of its current and intended users, as well as the local community;'

As evidenced in the letter from Guild Care (the operator of the children's day care facility) (see Appendix A), the current use on the site is relocating to a new facility. Guild Care has therefore found a suitable alternative site that meets the needs of their current and intended users. Part e) of Policy DM8 is therefore satisfied, and the principle of the change of use deemed acceptable regarding the displacement of a community facility.

Parking and Transport

While the existing hardstanding on the site is proposed to be used for parking, it should be noted that the proposed user does not intend for commercial vehicles of electricians to be parked on site for significant periods of time. Under the proposed use as an electrician's office, it is anticipated that light commercial vehicles will access the site only for the incidental trips into the office. Parking on the site will serve administrative workers using the office space. No vehicles are proposed to be parked on site overnight.

Access is proposed to be via the existing vehicle crossover and gate. This should be considered acceptable owing to the low frequency of vehicle movements expected on the site.

In light of the above, the proposal should be considered acceptable on the grounds of highways access and parking.

Employment

The proposal would also contribute positively to the employment offering within Worthing. Policy DM10 of the Worthing Local Plan (2023), in particular part f), states that:

> *'The Local Plan will support, promote and enable the continued development of a strong, sustainable and diverse local economy by:*
> *…*
> *f) identifying employment renewal opportunities for under-utilised and vacant premises;'*

The proposal makes us of a building that is being vacated following the relocation of Guild Care's services, as set out in their letter (see appendix A). The proposed use would provide for an increase in employment opportunity for Worthing, and contribute to strengthening the economic health of the Borough. It is therefore concluded that Policy DM10 is satisfied. The support for employment and jobs that the proposal provides should also be given significant weight in the assessment of this application.

Conclusion

As laid out by the above, the development should be considered acceptable in planning terms. Therefore, we respectfully request that this application be approved without delay.

If you have any further queries or require further information, please contact me on 01903 248777.

Yours sincerely
ECE Planning



Huw James MRTPI
Director

Appendix A – Letter from Guild Care

Head Office
Methold House
North Street
Worthing
West Sussex
BN11 1DU
Telephone
01903 528600
Email
headoffice@guildcare.org
www.guildcare.org

Leigh Doherty
Jacobs Steel

Sent by email:
leighdoherty@jacobs-steel.co.uk

16th April 2025

Dear Leigh,

Having presented your offers to the Board of Trustees I am delighted to confirm approval for the offer from **Simpson Electrical Solutions**.

As you are aware the service will require at contract exchange a delayed completion until after the school holidays, September 2025, to allow Guild Care to support our clients through the peak period and time to relocate the service to our Methold House Day Centre.

This service for clarification is not closing but relocating to our Worthing Day Centre.

Thank you for all your support,

Regards

Patrons: Derek Ridley, Tim Loughton, Henna Chowdhury, Mike Holland, Peter Robinson and Mavis Robinson
Guild Care is a company limited by guarantee registered in England under number 3021390. Registered charity number 1044658.