



Planning Statement

PROPOSAL:

**CHANGE OF USE FROM TWO
SELF-CONTAINED FLATS TO
A HOUSE IN MULTIPLE
OCCUPATION (CLASS C4) FOR
OCCUPATION BY 5 INDIVIDUALS**

SITE:

**13 CHRISTCHURCH ROAD
WORTHING, W SUSSEX BN11 1JH**

APPLICANT:

TURNING TIDES

The Context Appraisal

No.13 Christchurch Road is a late 19th century two storey semi-detached property currently arranged as two self-contained flats. It lies on the west side of Christchurch Road, a primarily residential street within central Worthing. Much of this residential development dates from the late Victorian period.

It is a rendered property with two-storey front bay window and hipped slate roof. There is a pillared portico on the front which is shared with No. 15, the other half of the semi-detached property.

It has a dwarf brick front boundary wall with flint panels inset. There is a drive running along the south side of the property leading to a garage building to the rear. The drive is separated from the front garden by a low panel timber fence.

The property lies within a section of Christchurch Road between Abbotts Close and Stoke Abbott Road to the south and Cambridge Road to the north. This is characterised by late 19th century residential properties of reasonably significant scale. At present, they comprise a mix of converted flats, HMOs and dwellings.

At the southern end of Christchurch Road, the character is more mixed and the development generally more recent. There is 20th century purpose-built flat blocks, a modern care centre and the Worthing Law Courts building.

The road does not of any special townscape quality and consequently does not lie in a designated Conservation Area.

Below is an aerial photograph with the subject property starred in red.

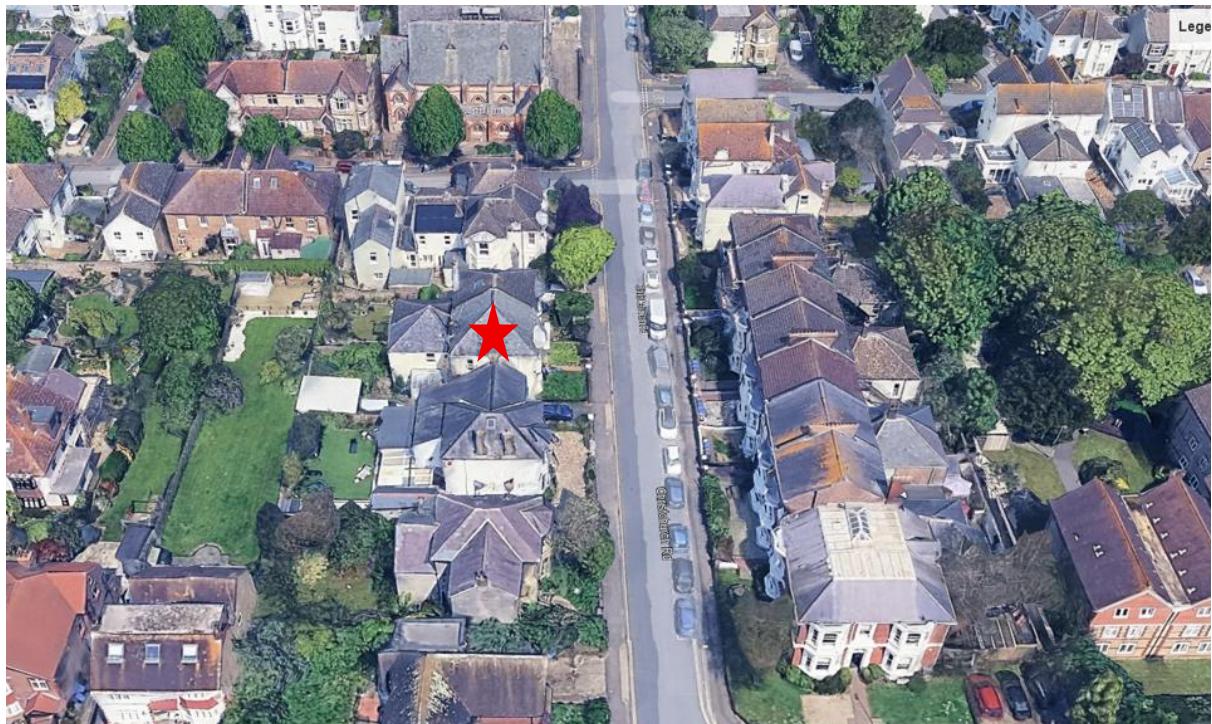


Figure 1 – Aerial photograph with subject property starred in red

Below is a street scene view of the subject property. It forms the left-hand half of the pair of semi-detached properties.



Figure 2 – Street scene view of subject property

The Proposal

At present, the flats at 13 Christchurch Road are owned by Worthing Homes, a community-based Housing Association that provides and manages social, affordable and intermediate rented homes as well as shared ownership properties in the Worthing area.

It is closely associated with Worthing Borough Council having inherited the Authority's housing stock.

Worthing Homes, faced with the need to potentially significantly upgrade the flats, saw this as providing an opportunity to partner with Turning Tides to support their joint mission towards ending local homelessness.

They have agreed to rent the property to Turning Tides in order for them to convert it into an HMO for five persons. Turning Tides is a housing charity that specialises in the provision of accommodation for homeless people.

Reproduced below and overleaf is background information on the applicants taken from their website.

Turning Tides is a charity dedicated to ending homelessness in West Sussex. Founded in 1991, we've grown from a small group of kind-hearted Christians to the largest homelessness charity in the county. We work to reduce rough sleeping in our communities and support our clients to take steps towards independent living and a more stable future. While our central office is in Worthing, our work spans the county – from East Grinstead to Littlehampton and across areas in between.

Our location means we have a deep understanding of rural and coastal homelessness, where available services can be even more stretched, and this less visible side of rough sleeping is a large focus of our work. Our long-standing roots in the local community are a real strength. We work hard to raise awareness about the causes of homelessness and to challenge the stigma around it, helping to create a more understanding and welcoming society where our clients can feel at home.

As strong believers in the importance of transparency, we've shared here the driving purpose behind our work as well as our values and commitments.

Homelessness takes many forms and in West Sussex it's not always visible. We work across towns, villages and rural areas, supporting people who might otherwise go unseen and helping them move towards a safer, more stable future.

With over 20 accommodation projects, two community hubs and a wide range of specialist teams, we tailor our response to each individual's situation whether they're in danger or crisis, seeking recovery from addiction or needing supported accommodation.

Many of the people we support are living with complex needs such as poor mental health, addiction and trauma. Often, they've found themselves on the margins of society – on the outside looking in – among the most socially excluded and at risk of harm.

Our work to address rough sleeping involves helping people to access housing in a challenging market, one that doesn't lend itself to those on the edges, while making sure they can access the support services they need. By combining these approaches, we provide practical, lasting support for those experiencing homelessness.

We work with single adults who have a local connection to West Sussex including marginalised groups such as Veterans, people released from prison, those who have lived in care and refugees in need. Homelessness is rarely a personal failing; it's often the result of systemic ones. The people we support are not to be feared – they're members of our community in need of understanding and practical help.

But we cannot do this alone. Lasting change depends on strong partnerships with local authorities, health and social care providers, community groups, businesses and volunteers. By harnessing the strengths, skills and resources of the whole sector, we're building a coalition of the willing: working together to create opportunity and belonging for everyone in our community.

In this instance, the intention is to use the property as an HMO to house single persons recovering from alcohol or drug addiction.

Five residents would be accommodated and there would be a shared kitchen and lounge facility.

Tenants would be carefully selected to cover those persons thought to be capable of transitioning to independent living in a partly managed environment.

There would not be any full-time manager present on-site, but the Turning Tides team would make regular visits to the property to ensure that tenants are well supported, and the property is, otherwise, operating appropriately. The aim here is to provide a recovery housing facility to enable alcohol and drug dependent persons to progress to independent living.

The proposed layout for the HMO is reproduced in floor plan drawings overleaf. It includes two bedrooms on the ground floor and three on the first floor with the communal living areas being provided on the ground floor. The conversion only requires one external change, and this is the insertion of a ground floor window on the south side elevation.

Turning Tides are cognisant of Worthing Borough Council's space standards for HMOs and the level and type of facilities that will be required. These standards would be met with Turning Tides anticipating spending significant sums of money in fully refurbishing the property.

The existing flats have lacked significant repair and refurbishment over recent years, and the property is now in a situation of requiring significant overhaul.

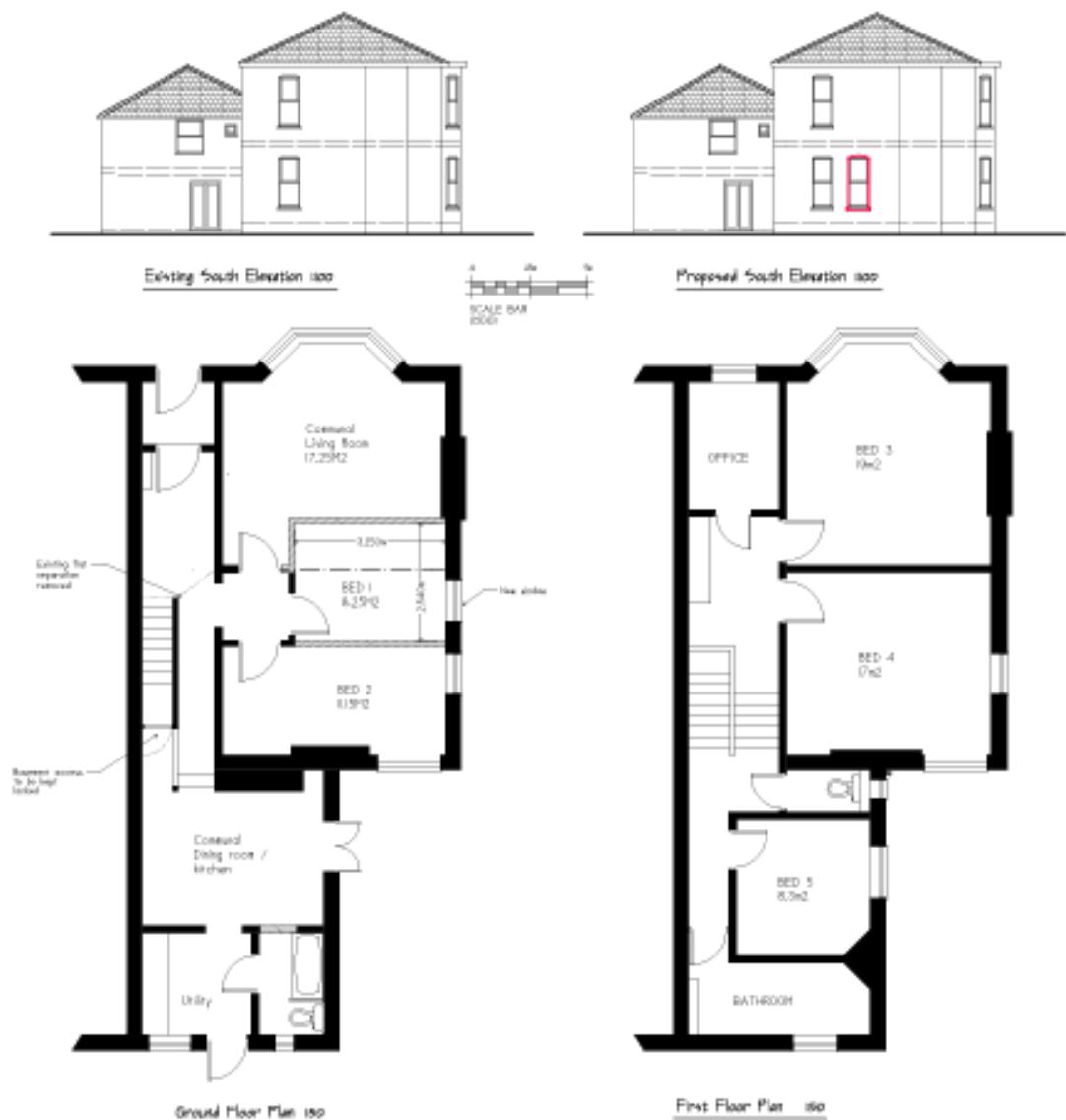


Figure 3 – Proposed floor plans and elevations

Planning Policy Context

The statutory Development Plan for the area comprises the Worthing Local Plan 2023. Relevant policies in this document are **SP1**, **DM1** and **DM5**. These are reproduced in full below and overleaf.

SP1 PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- a) Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in Neighbourhood Plans) will be approved without delay.
- b) Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date, the Council will grant permission unless:
 - i. the application of policies in the National Planning Policy Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provide a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
 - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole.

DM1 HOUSING MIX

- a) In order to deliver sustainable, mixed and balanced communities, the Council will expect all applications for new housing to consider the most up-to-date evidence of housing needs and demands to help determine the most appropriate housing mix based on the character and location of the individual site.
- b) The Council will support proposals for high-quality self-build and custom-build projects that are sensitive to the characteristics of the local area.
- c) Housing developments should provide flexible, socially inclusive and adaptable accommodation to help meet the diverse needs of the community and the changing needs of occupants over time. The Council will expect all new build dwellings to meet the optional higher Building Regulations Standard M4(2) for Accessible and Adaptable dwellings unless it can be demonstrated that this would be impractical, unachievable or unviable.
- d) To meet the needs of older people, housing with support and housing with care should be prioritised over care bed spaces. These should be in both affordable and market tenures in accessible and suitable locations close to local services.
- e) The Council will seek to resist any net loss of existing residential

accommodation (Use Class C3). 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.

f) When considering proposals for the conversion of dwellings into smaller units of self-contained accommodation, the proposal must provide a high standard of accommodation that complies with internal space standards and requirements for private outdoor space. In addition, the Council will consider:

- i) the impact on the mix of dwellings locally
- ii) the impact on the character of the area

DM5 - QUALITY OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

- a) All new development (including extensions, residential annexes, alterations, ancillary development, change of use and intensification) should:
 - i) be of a high architectural and design quality and respect and enhance the character of the site and the prevailing character of the area. This will include consideration of proportion, form, design, context, massing, siting, layout, density, height, size, scale, materials, detailed design features and landscaping;
 - ii) enhance the local environment by way of its appearance and character, with particular attention being paid to the architectural form, height, materials, density, scale, orientation, landscaping, tree canopy, impact on street scene and layout of the development;
 - iii) make a positive contribution to the sense of place, local character and distinctiveness of an area;
 - iv) respect, preserve and where appropriate enhance, heritage assets and settings;
 - v) be well built, accessible, fit for purpose, and adaptable to changing lifestyle, demography and climate;
 - vi) include a layout and design which: take account of potential users of the site; create safe conditions for access, egress and active travel (walking and cycling) between all locations; provide good links to integrated public transport; and have acceptable parking arrangements (in terms of amount and layout);
 - vii) make a positive contribution to creating a safe and secure environment by integrating measures for security and designing out opportunities for crime;

- viii) not have an unacceptable impact on the occupiers of adjacent properties, particularly of residential dwellings, including unacceptable loss of privacy, daylight/sunlight, outlook, an unacceptable increase in noise giving rise in significant adverse impacts, or vehicular movements resulting in severe cumulative impacts on the road network, or loss of important open space of public value (unless it satisfies any of the exceptions set out under Policy DM7 – Open Space, Recreation and Leisure);
- ix) respect the existing natural features of the site, including landform, trees and biodiversity and contribute positively to biodiversity net gain. Where appropriate, this will include the protection and integration of existing trees and green infrastructure into new developments;
- x) ensure that lighting incorporated into developments provides the minimum for public safety, is energy efficient and avoids light pollution.

Residential Annexes

- b) Residential annexes must be designed as ancillary to the main dwelling and be capable of satisfactory conversion for use in association with the main dwelling when it is no longer required by a relative or dependant.

Ensuring Approved Plans are Delivered

- c) To ensure that the quality of approved development is not materially diminished between permission and completion, where appropriate, the Council will resist subsequent planning applications that would impact negatively on the design and quality of the approved scheme.

Evaluation

There is not considered any specific policy objection in the Local Plan to a change of use from a single house or multiple flats to a house in multiple occupation.

No.13 Christchurch Road sits within a central location of Worthing where the housing stock is a mix of houses, flats and HMOs. An HMO in this position would therefore not be out of character with the area.

The two present flats have essentially been let out as social housing units by Worthing Homes. The flats now require substantial expenditure in order to improve and modernise them.

Worthing Homes have partnered with Turning Tides, a housing charity they have close links with, in relation to the future use of the flats. This cooperation is seen as providing an opportunity, from within their housing stock, to support Turning Tides's valuable work.

Turning Tides would rent the property from Worthing Homes but, at their own expense, would substantially modernise the dwelling as part of the conversion to an HMO for five persons.

The way the HMO would be operated by Turning Tides essentially means that it would continue as social housing provision, as opposed to being open market housing.

It is intended to modernise the property to a high standard and to provide an appropriate level of facilities to enable shared living to take place.

Bedroom, lounge and kitchen sizes will meet Local Authority minimum standards. The provision of five bedrooms within the property represents a comfortable conversion and not an over-development of the available floor space.

Turning Tides will operate the property as an intermediary housing facility aimed at providing 'soft touch supported living' as a precursor to getting tenants ready for full independent living within their own self-contained accommodation.

Turning Tides would closely monitor the dwelling and make regular visits to it. They would provide a contact point for local residents, should there be any complaint or problems arising.

They have a track record of considerate management of their properties and are attuned to the need to protect residential amenity from any anti-social behaviour.

Turning Tides is a charity that has a long track record of providing accommodation in the local area, particularly for vulnerable members of society, such as those recovering from alcohol or drug addiction.

Tenants of their properties are carefully selected. The intention being to provide opportunities for those persons considered to have the best chance of transferring to independent living.

How the property would be viewed within the street scene would not alter as a result of this change of use. Only one slight external alteration is envisaged, and this is the provision of an additional ground floor window on the side elevation.

It is not anticipated that tenants would have their own private cars and therefore the need for off-street parking would not arise. Nonetheless, there is a drive to the side of the property which could accommodate a parking space for a visiting member of the Turning Tides staff.

In planning policy terms, the remit of policies **DM1**, **DM5** and **SP1** are met in this instance.

The application property lies in a highly sustainable town centre location which would give the tenants good access to a wide range of services.

It is considered an appropriate location for a small-sized HMO such as this.