



Design & Access Statement

Westminster Court, Brighton Road, Worthing
24.06.2026



Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared to support a planning application for life safety remedial works at Westminster Court, Brighton Road, Worthing. The proposal involves the replacement of the existing east-facing casement windows within the flat commonway lobbies at each floor level (first to eighth floor) with high-performance Colt Coltlite Automatic Opening Vents (AOVs). Additionally, a new AOV will be installed at the head of the common staircase on the eastern elevation.

These essential works are designed to upgrade the building's retrospective smoke ventilation system in direct response to the independent Fire Safety Strategy compiled by Elev8 Fire Engineering (Doc Ref: Elev8250655, Rev: P01). The overarching objective is to safeguard the single vertical escape stair and ensure compliant conditions for both escaping residents and incoming firefighting personnel.

Use

The building is an existing, purpose-built residential block of apartments containing thirty-six self-contained dwellings in general needs use. The building features a single protected escape staircase and two passenger lifts serving the upper floors. The proposed development preserves this established residential use entirely, introducing non-material infrastructural changes solely dedicated to life safety and fire protection.

Amount

The scope of works is strictly limited to the external eastern elevation of the block and comprises:

- **Lobby AOVs:** The replacement of the existing commonway window units within the residential lobbies on each of the upper floors with Colt Coltlite louvred AOVs.
- **Stair-Head AOV:** The installation of an AOV unit at the top storey (head) of the common vertical escape stair enclosure on the eastern elevation.

As per the Elev8 Fire Strategy, the new Colt Coltlite units are specified to provide a minimum geometric free area of 1.5m² within each flat lobby to adequately protect the escape route. The new stair-head vent will provide a minimum free area of 1m². In compliance with current standards, these vents will be fully automated and linked to a localized Category L5 communal smoke detection system. Upon detection of smoke in any given flat lobby, the AOV on that specific fire floor and the stair-head AOV will simultaneously actuate, while AOVs on non-fire floors will remain securely closed to restrict smoke bypass.

Scale

Westminster Court stands at an approximate height of 21.12 metres to the uppermost occupied floor slab. The physical proportions, footprint, and height of the building remain completely unaltered by this application. The replacement louvred vents are engineered to fit precisely within the structural constraints of the existing masonry window openings. Consequently, the scale of the building relative to its site and

surroundings is unchanged, and there will be no detrimental impact on the structural integrity or silhouette of the edifice.

Layout

The internal layout of the residential corridors, common staircases, lift shafts, and private apartments remains exactly as existing. No floor space is expanded, omitted, or reconfigured.

Landscaping

N/A

Appearance

The existing eastern elevation currently features standard casement commonway windows. The proposed Colt Coltlite AOVs will introduce a clean, contemporary louvred profile to these openings. To maintain visual continuity across the block and respect the character of the building, the aluminium frames and louvres will be finished in white that seamlessly coordinates with the building's existing window trim and external fixtures.

The installation is designed to look neat, uniform, and integrated into the facade. It represents an aesthetic and functional upgrade that preserves the architectural balance of the eastern elevation without imposing any visual harm on the Worthing street scene.

Access

The existing pedestrian and vehicular access provisions to Westminster Court via Brighton Road remain completely unchanged. Fire service vehicle access routes, vehicle hardstandings, and proximity to external fire hydrants are completely unaffected. Internally, the single vertical escape stair and passenger lift access configurations remain unmodified. The installation of automated smoke ventilation significantly enhances internal accessibility during an emergency by actively keeping the primary escape paths clear of toxic smoke and heat, thereby aiding vulnerable residents and improving operational safety for the Fire and Rescue Service.

Developments Within or Affecting Conservation Area, a Listed Building or its Setting, Archaeologically Sensitive Areas, Scheduled Ancient Monuments or Historic Parks and Gardens

Westminster Court is a mid-20th-century residential block. The property is not a listed building, nor does it stand within an immediate Conservation Area or an archaeologically sensitive setting. The replacement of commonway glazing with purpose-built, high-specification louvred AOVs will not harm the character, appearance, or setting of any historical assets or nearby properties in the Worthing locality.

Summary

This application outlines a vital, life-safety-driven asset improvement designed to bring the building's commonway smoke control provisions into alignment with modern technical recommendations, as mandated by the project's retrospective

Fire Safety Strategy. By removing restrictive, sub-standard openable windows and installing automated Colt Coltlite 1.5m² lobby AOVs alongside a 1m² stair-head vent, the building's "Stay Put" evacuation policy can be adequately supported and safeguarded.

The proposal carefully respects the scale, appearance, and layout of the existing building while addressing an essential fire safety defect. Accordingly, we firmly believe that this planning application represents an appropriate and necessary development that should be recommended for approval at the earliest opportunity.