Expiry Date - 12/11/2025
Extension of Time -

Development Management – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/1115/25 **Recommendation: – REFUSE**

Site: **The Charmandean Centre Forest Road Worthing West Sussex**

Proposal: **Installation of new 1.2-1.8 metre high Art Deco-style railings with integrated internally illuminated signage and advertising boards; facade alterations including feature white render to north and east elevations and Art Deco-style external lighting.**

Date of Site Visit: Various

Neighbours Checked: Y

Additional Neighbours Notified: N

Site and Surroundings
The Charmandean Centre is a long-established events and community venue located at the junction of Forest Road and the A27 (Upper Brighton Road).

It is a distinctive prominent building which has art deco style with brick and render accents and motifs.

The current boundary on the north and north-east comprises a low brick wall with tarmac behind with parking and access to the building.

The site is in a residential area with a mixture of primarily detached and semi-detached houses.

Proposal

The application proposes 1.2m high railings on the north and north east boundaries with elements of the railings that incorporate integrated internally illuminated signage and advertising boards to the height of 1.8m. The proposed railings will be formed in powder-coated steel or aluminium, in a black finish. Inspired by the Art Deco style, the railings will incorporate linear and geometric patterns.

The application also includes selected areas of the existing brick façade white rendered, creating vertical and horizontal accents that align with the geometry of Art Deco design.

Two Art Deco-style external light fittings are proposed on the north-east corner of the building

Relevant Planning History:

95/05798/ADV - INSTALLATION OF TWO EXTERNALLY ILLUMINATED BOUNDARY SIGNS AND INTERNALLY ILLUMINATED FASCIA SIGN ON CANOPY ABOVE MAIN ENTRANCE

STATUS: 22nd February 1995.

95/05800/FULL - PROPOSED NEW ENTRANCE STEPS AND HANDRAILS
STATUS: Conditional Consent 11th April 1995.

07/0980/FULL - Installation of extendable electric awning with replacement entrance doors to front entrance and painting of section to front elevation.
STATUS: Conditional Consent 3rd October 2007.

Consultations

National Highways

Recommend that planning permission not be granted for a specified period (see reasons at Annex A);

Recommend that planning permission not be granted for a specified period: Reasons
It is recommended that the application should not be determined for a period of three months until 08 April 2026.

This recommendation can be replaced, renewed, or reviewed during the three-month period, or at its end, dependent on progress made with regards to the outstanding matters.

We will be concerned with proposals that have the potential to impact on the safe and efficient operation of the SRN, in this case, particularly within the vicinity of the A27.
Throughout this response ACTION points for the applicant are highlighted in underlined bold.

Safety Risk Assessment
We have reviewed the submitted Safety Risk Assessment (SRA) and are content that it has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) document GG 104.

Structures

Further information needs to be submitted to demonstrate the structural integrity of the proposal.
A Category 0 (Cat 0) certificate will be required to confirm that the illuminated signage and advertising boards are structurally sound, present no risk to public safety, and have been designed in accordance with the appropriate standards (all should be listed within the certificate).
Designers should clearly confirm which standards have been used, particularly in relation to the connections between the new frames and the existing low-level brick wall. They should verify that the existing walls are capable of supporting the loads imposed by the new frames.

The certificate should be prepared in accordance with the DMRB document CG 300, Appendix J, and signed by suitably qualified engineers. Relevant General Arrangement (GA) drawings must be attached.
Conclusion
Given the above, it is currently not possible to determine whether the application would have an unacceptable impact on the safety, reliability and/or operational efficiency of the SRN.
National Highways currently recommends that planning permission not be granted (other than a refusal if the Council so wishes) for a period of three months until 08 April 2026 to allow the applicant to resolve the outstanding matters.
This recommendation can be replaced, renewed, or reviewed during the three-month period, or at its end, dependent on progress made with regards to the outstanding matters.

Standing advice to the local planning authority
The Climate Change Committee's 2022 Report to Parliament notes that for the UK to achieve net zero carbon status by 2050, action is needed to support a modal shift away from car travel. The NPPF supports this position, with paragraphs 77 and 110 prescribing that significant development should offer a genuine choice of transport modes, while paragraphs 109 and 115 advise that appropriate opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport should be taken up as part of a vision-led approach.
Moreover, the carbon reduction hierarchy (avoid-switch-improve) as set out in clause 4.3 of PAS2080:2023 promotes approaches and measures to minimise resource consumption and thereby reduce carbon emissions.
These considerations should be weighed alongside any relevant Local Plan policies to ensure that planning decisions are in line with the necessary transition to net zero carbon.

Planning Applications Highways

The LHA has been reconsulted on this application following the submission of a Safety Risk Assessment under DMRB GG 104 - the impact on safety on motorway and all-purpose trunk roads. The document has been produced for consideration by National Highways with regards the potential impact of this proposal on the A27. As such the LPA is advised to consult National Highways.

Neighbour Representations

There are 9 letters of representation (edited)

69, 74, 75, 76, 77, 81, 85, 91 Upper Brighton Road, 82 Forest Road

- The design of this proposal is not in keeping with this residential area, 1.2m-1.8m high railings stood on top of the existing wall will be very imposing and introduce a commercial feel.

- The parking is currently unacceptable and creates congestion, the proposal will exacerbate this.

- Create Additional anti-social behaviour from additional events
- Light pollution
- Impact on highway safety
- This is a residential area and large advertising hoardings are not in-keeping with, or appropriate in this local community area.
- The possibility of increased evening commercial events taking place at the Charmandean Centre is not good for the local community as they attract large crowds, congestion, parking issues and a noise nuisance, particularly late at night.

Relevant Planning Policies:

Worthing Local Plan policies (WBC 2023): SP1, DM5, DM6, DM15, DM22
National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG 2024)
National Planning Practice Guidance

Planning Assessment:

There is no objection in principle to extensions and alterations to buildings within the built-up area. The key considerations are the effects on the visual and residential amenities of the locality as well as highway safety.

Visual Amenity

The National Planning Policy Framework advises in Paragraph 131 that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Paragraph 135 indicates that development should: (b) be visually attractive and (c) sympathetic to local character and history, and in Paragraph 139 states: “Development that is not well designed should be refused especially where it fails to reflect local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes”.

Policy DM5 of the WLP requires all new development to (amongst other things) be of a high architectural and design quality and respect and enhance the character of the site and the prevailing character of the area; 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, impact on street scene and the layout of the development; and make a positive contribution to the sense of place, local character and distinctiveness of an area

The Charmandean Centre comprises a large detached distinctive building on the corner of Forest Road and Upper Brighton Road. The building is symmetrical facing onto the corner there is a low wall to the frontage and significant hardstanding to the front and rear. Although a large building used for events and community activities it

sits comfortably within its residential area particularly on the south side of Upper Brighton Road with Forest Road where the properties tend to low brick walls and a spacious setting.

The current application is for 1.2-1.8 m high Art Deco-style railings with integrated internally illuminated signage and advertising boards, facade alterations including feature white render to north and east elevations and Art Deco-style external lighting

The railings would be on a prominent corner of Upper Brighton Road (A27) and Forest Road, although a commercial building it sits within a residential area. Railings up to 1.2m could be accommodated on this site, however the integrated internal illuminated signage within the railings to 1.8m in height would be totally out of character with the design and scale of the railings, the character of the building and its curtilage and would be visually obtrusive in this primarily residential area.

The application also proposes white render to the bottom half of the building and the full height of the corner entrance with two Art deco style lights. The render to the lower half of the building provides some relief which would be appropriate for the style and character of the building. However, concern is raised with the proposal to render the entrance corner. This entrance is a feature of the building with art deco elements such as the white framing around the door and window. These features, and the entrance overall, make a positive contribution to the building and wider streetscene. The rendering of this corner would detract from the overall aesthetic of the building and harm the streetscene.

Residential Amenity

The site is surrounding by two storey residential development. The railings themselves would not impact on residential amenity in terms of loss of light. However the railings particularly the illuminated sign boards integrated within the railings would be unduly visual prominent to surrounding residents leading to additional light pollution and obtrusive signage detrimental to residential amenity.

Local residential have also cited concern in relation to additional parking, noise and disturbance and potential anti-social behaviour. Although it is appreciated that the proposal and additional advertising could lead to additional events, the proposal does not involve an increase in the area of the building or any loss of parking and therefore a refusal on this basis could not be sustained.

Highway safety

The site is on the junction of Upper Brighton Road (A27) and Forest Road a residential street. The application proposes significant signage on both frontages. National Highways have raised concerns that the proposal has the potential to impact on the safe and efficient operation of the Strategic Road Network (SRN), in this case, particularly within the vicinity of the A27.

They indicate that further information is required to demonstrate the structural integrity of the proposal. As there are fundamental concern in relation to the application it is not considered prudent to request this information at this stage.

Recommendation:

REFUSE for the reason:-

1. The proposed railings and in particular the elements of railings containing the integrated illuminated signage to 1.8m would due their siting, design, size and illumination constitute a visually discordant addition, out of character with the design and scale of the railings, the character of the building and its curtilage and would be visually obtrusive and detrimental to the street scene in this primarily residential area. The proposal is therefore contrary to policy DM5 and DM22 of the Worthing Local Plan 2023, and the relevant policies of the National Planning Policy Framework

2. The proposed render to the front entrance would result in an unacceptable level of harm to the character of the building to its detriment and to that of the wider streetscene contrary to policy DM5 of the Worthing Local Plan (2023) and the relevant policies of the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. The use proposed railings and in particular the elements of railings containing the integrated illuminated signage to 1.8m in by reason of the siting, scale and illumination cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of the neighbouring residents in terms of visual impact and light spillage. The proposal is therefore contrary to policy DM5 and DM22 of the Worthing Local Plan 2023, and the relevant policies of the National Planning Policy Framework.

4. Without evidence of the structural integrity of the proposal the application has the potential to impact on the safe and efficient operation of the Strategic Road Network (SRN), in this case, particularly within the vicinity of the A27. The proposal is therefore contrary to policy DM5 and DM15 of the Worthing Local Plan 2023, and the relevant policies of the National Planning Policy Framework

Informative

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by identifying matters of concern with the proposal and determining the application within a timely manner, clearly setting out the reason(s) for refusal, allowing the Applicant the opportunity to consider the harm caused and whether or not it can be remedied by a revision to the proposal. The Local Planning Authority is willing to meet with the Applicant to discuss the best course of action and is also willing to provide pre-application advice in respect of any future application for a revised development.

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

Case Officer: Jackie Fox Date:14.01.26

Authorised by: Louise Prew Date:16/01/2026