

Development Management – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWD/0240/26

Recommendation: – APPROVE

Site: 54 Chapel Road Worthing West Sussex BN11 1BE

Proposal: Change of use from Food and Drink Class E(b) to provision for education Class F1(a)

Last visited: 21.04.26

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: N

Site and Surroundings

The site is located on the eastern side of Chapel Road and contains a three storey (with loft accommodation). The site has an empty unit at ground floor last used by 'Split Milk Coffee Shop' and residential units above.

A rear door opens out onto a hard surfaced courtyard, shared with no. 52.

The site is within Chapel Road Conservation Area.

The site is within Worthing town centre within the Chapel Road South character area. The site is within the secondary shopping frontage.

Proposal

The proposal is to change the use from a commercial, retail unit (Class E) to an education use (F1) providing places for students with an EHCP from West Sussex County Council. The application form indicates that they are planning to expand their offer to 16-18 year olds who are not ready to access local colleges due to their additional needs.

The proposed change of use will retain a retail area at the front of the unit with teaching space behind.

The supporting statement provides the following explanation:

The proposed use will operate as an extension to the educational activities already established at No. 52. A key component of the proposal is the creation of a supervised hair and beauty salon, providing structured vocational training for students. Hair and beauty treatments will be offered to members of the public on a pre-booked basis

In addition to the salon use, the premises will accommodate:

- Supervised community fund-raising events*
- Pop-up retail activities*
- A retail area selling hair and beauty products to the public*

The salon will have an advanced booking system for public clients. Clients will enter through the main entrance off Chapel Road and be escorted to the salon. This system will ensure public access is appropriately managed, with a clear distinction between public areas and student learning spaces, while maintaining a safe and professional experience for visitors

The retail element provides students with invaluable experience of interacting with members of the public, developing key skills for adult life.

A range of hair and beauty products will be on sale to the public at all times, and a retail display of items for sale will be maintained in the shop window

Relevant Site History:

AWDM/0222/24- Change of Use from Class E (Parking shop) to educational use (Use Class F1) with ancillary café at 52 Chapel Road- Approved 27.06.24

Consultations

West Sussex County Council

The LHA has been consulted on the above application. A nil parking provision is proposed. There are parking restrictions in place on the local highway network, prohibiting parking in places that would be detrimental to highway safety. The location of the proposal is within a sustainable location.

The LHA would not expect the proposal would cause any highway safety or capacity concerns contrary to the NPPF.

Worthing Society:

This building is located in the Chapel Road Conservation Area. There would be no alterations externally. However, the retail floor space to be retained looks rather small – would it be sufficient to be viable? Perhaps this aspect should be reviewed. In summary, we offer no objection.

Adur and Worthing Councils

WSP (on behalf of WBC):

Following a review of the submitted information, we have no objection on surface water grounds. Due to the size, site, location and type of development, **we would recommend the approval of the application**

Private Sector Housing team: No comment.

Environmental Health:

Thank you for the confirmation that an acrylic nail service will not be offered at the premises.

Subject to the hours of operation stated in the Planning Statement V1 (8.30am to 4.40pm, Monday to Friday), we have no comments to this application

Representations:

None received

Relevant Planning Policies

Worthing Local Plan policies (WBC 2023): SP1, SP3, SS3, DM5, DM8, DM13, DM15, DM16, DM20, DM22, DM23, DM24
Worthing Town Centre Study Update (March 2020)
Worthing Retail & Town Centre Uses Study (2017)
Chapel Road Conservation Area Appraisal
National Planning Policy Framework (2023)
Planning Practice Guidance

Planning Assessment

Principle

Policy SS3 within the adopted Local Plan sets out the overarching development principles for the town centre by seeking to ensure that the types of uses and activities that best meet the aspirations and vision for the Town Centre are realised. It seeks to maximise the opportunities presented by the town centre location, building on what's already special about the town and exploiting its 'unique selling points' including the seafront setting, historic and cultural assets, green spaces and burgeoning creative sector and digital to strengthen the Town Centre as a location for shopping, leisure, community, culture, business and enhance its tourist appeal.

Policy DM13 sets out the more detailed approach to shopping frontages. This states that in Secondary Shopping Frontage a wider range of uses will be supported provided they are active uses with active shop fronts that will enhance the vitality and viability and complement existing uses. However, uses such as takeaways and uses with closed and inactive street frontages will be resisted.

Policy DM8 sets out that the Council will work with service providers to deliver appropriate facilities in accessible locations. Proposals by service providers for the

delivery of facilities in appropriate locations to meet the needs generated by new development and existing communities will be supported in principle.

The main policy consideration here is the use of a unit within the secondary shopping frontage as an educational unit. While policy DM13 says that a wider range of uses will be provided these are usually those associated with an active frontage. The proposal includes a small retail unit at the front associated with the supervised hair and beauty salon behind which will be used for vocational training for students. Hair and beauty treatments will be offered to members of the public on a pre-booked basis. Although the retail unit is small it would be associated with the use to the rear and enable an active frontage which can be secured by condition. While it is noted that hours of operation are only 8.30am to 4.30pm during weekdays the unit will appear as an active unit outside these times.

The applicant has advised that the rear of the unit will be secure for safeguarding purposes.

Overall, it is considered that while the unit does not strictly meet the requirements of policy DM13 for secondary shopping frontages the provision of educational support for children with a small retail unit it is considered acceptable on balance.

Impact on the amenities of neighbouring occupiers

There are residential flats on the upper floors of no. 54, and the adjacent premises.

The site is in a town centre location surrounded by commercial development. The normal school hours are 8.30am to 4.40pm, Monday to Friday. Environmental Health officers have suggested that the hours be restricted as set out in the application. The site is however in a town centre location with a range of surrounding uses and hours of operation and although a 4:40 would be restrictive for this location in view of the proposed use and surrounding residential development the hours of 8.00 am to 6.00 pm on Mondays to Fridays and 8.00 am and 1.00 pm on Saturdays would be appropriate and would allow flexibility for the proposed without impact on neighbouring amenity.

The site does not provide any external alterations so there are not considered to be any changes to daylight, sunlight or sense of enclosure for any neighbouring occupiers and there is not considered to be any detrimental activity or intensification for neighbouring properties.

A condition is proposed to restrict the use from providing an acrylic service due to the potential fumes and nuisance issues associated with this.

Visual amenity and impact on designated heritage assets

There are no external alterations proposed so the development will not have an impact on visual amenity or the conservation area.

Highways and access

The site is located within the town centre. The location is in a sustainable location with many options to access the site. Whilst the use will increase trips, it is expected these would be by foot from nearby bus stops, the train station or local car parks.

The LHA have not raised any objections or provided conditions.

Drainage

The application has been reviewed by the Council's drainage consultant who raised no objection to the proposals.

Recommendation

APPROVE Subject to Conditions: -

1. Approved plans
2. Standard time limit
3. Ensure shop area remains public at all times
4. Hours 8.00 am and 6.00 pm on Mondays to Fridays inclusive, 8.00 am and 1.00 pm on Saturdays
5. No acrylic nail service

Informative:

1. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.
2. Southern Water

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

Case Officer: Jackie Fox

Date: 10.06.26

Authorised by: Louise Prew

Date: 30/06/2026