Expiry Date - 29/04/2025

Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/0286/25 **Recommendation – APPROVE**

Site: **1 Littlehampton Road Worthing West Sussex BN13 1PY**

Proposal: **First-floor extension over rear existing storage and associated works (part retrospective application)**

Date of site visit: 20.05.2024 (As for AWDM/0405/24)

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: N

Site and Surroundings

The application site relates to a three-storey building located on the south side of Littlehampton Road at the western end of the neighbourhood shopping parade and close to a busy road junction where the A2031 (Rectory Road) intersects the A2032 (Littlehampton Road). The ground floor is occupied by a restaurant and takeaway business with the recently extended upper floors in use as residential flats (1A, Flat 1 and Flat 2) within the same ownership as the application property.

To the east side of the building is a drive providing access to the rear of the site where a former single-storey rear component has been extended without permission by a first-floor addition. The latter is finished in cream coloured render to match the rest of the building with a flat, 'felted' roof. The rear building is apparently used for storage in connection with the restaurant/take-away business with a pair of garage doors facing onto the access drive. There is no access to the first floor from within the storage building. A door at first floor opens onto a shallow platform (currently incomplete). Although sited very close to an external staircase which provides access to the upper floor flats at 1A, there is no direct access from staircase to the first-floor door/platform of the storage building.

The property is located within the medium-scale Thomas a Becket shopping centre.

To the east of the application property 'Becket Buildings' is a distinctive mixed-use 3-storey terraced block that wraps around the road frontages of Littlehampton Road and Rectory Road. It comprises various shopping/commercial uses on ground floor with residential flats above.

Adjoining to the west is 'Cedar Garage', a car repair/servicing garage incorporating an older, large-scale, single storey building running the length of the western side boundary and beyond.

To the south of the site is a vacant garage compound plus vacant part single part two storey store/workshop and office building.

Proposal

Permission is sought (part retrospectively) to retain the first-floor, flat-roofed addition to the rear store (5.1m deep x 5.2m wide x 5.3m high) with a new internal staircase providing access to the first floor. The existing door opening and platform on the east elevation will be removed, replaced with a window. The first floor will be used as storage in connection with the restaurant/take-away business (in addition to the pre-existing ground floor storage area).

Relevant Planning History:

AWDM/0405/24 Change of use from restaurant at ground-floor to an office and 2-bedroom flat; demolition of the attached rear storage building and erection of an attached two-storey, pitched roof dwelling house with associated bin/bike storage in front garden; insertion of sky lantern to extg single-storey element; insertion of new/replacement windows at ground-floor; and removal of restaurant kitchen extractor duct. Refused 20.06.2024 on the following grounds: -

1. *The proposed attached 2-storey pitched-roof dwelling, by reason of its unsympathetic scale, form, massing, layout and design would represent an incongruous and cramped overdevelopment of the site, lacking in visual coherence to the host building and harmful to local character and sense of place. As such the proposed development would be contrary to policy DM5 of the Worthing Local Plan, and the relevant paragraphs of the National Planning Policy Framework.*

2. *By reason of its cramped siting and poor layout the proposed development would result in an unsatisfactory standard of residential accommodation with poor outlook and privacy for the future occupiers, and in addition to the failure of Unit 1D to meet the Government's nationally described minimum floor space standard, would be contrary to policies DM2 and DM5 of the Worthing Local Plan, and the relevant paragraphs of the National Planning Policy Framework.*

3. *Owing to its small size, the Local Planning Authority is not satisfied that the proposed office (Class E) would be commercially viable potentially resulting in a dead frontage that would detract from the vitality and viability of this medium scale local shopping and set a harmful precedent to the detriment of the successful functioning of the centre and its ability to meet local needs, contrary to policy DM13 of the Worthing Local Plan and the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.*

Appeal Dismissed 17.01.2025.

AWDM/0320/23 Erection of pitched-roof, first-floor extension for storage purposes over existing ground-floor rear storage building, accessed from existing external stairs (1A) with access deck to east side (Part Retrospective). Refused 18.07.2023 on the following ground:

1.The proposed development would, by reason of its scale, siting, and design, represent a dominant and unsympathetic overdevelopment of the site, detrimental to the visual amenities of the site and its surroundings. As such the proposed development would be contrary to policy DM5 of the Worthing Local Plan, and the relevant paragraphs of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Consultations: None undertaken.

Representations: None received.

Relevant Planning Policies

Worthing Local Plan 2020-2036 (WBC 2023): Policies:
SP1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development)
DM5 (Quality of the Built Environment)
DM13 (Retail & Town Centre uses)

National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG 2024)
National Planning Practice Guidance

Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

The provision of an additional 20.3sqm of ancillary storage space on the first floor would be consistent with the location of the building within a designated medium-scale shopping centre where policy DM13 seeks to encourage convenient and accessible local shopping (and related) facilities that are of a scale appropriate to the role and function of the local centre.

Visual Amenity

In refusing the earlier applications (AWDM/0320/23 and AWDM/0405/24) the Council considered that the enlarged scale and massing of the resulting 2-storey rear component, its lack of visual coherence to the host building and surrounding context, represented an unacceptable overdevelopment of the site.

However, whilst dismissing the above-mentioned appeal (which involved the addition of a pitched roof to the rear component not included here), the Inspecter disagreed, noting that the site is within a relatively densely built-up urban area and that the enlarged building element, constructed to the rear of the taller frontage component would not be readily visible from the public

realm and would appear as a subservient addition to the larger scale and massing of the main building.

Whilst the omission of the pitched roof in this case results in a more utilitarian appearance, the removal of the first-floor door and platform will help it to assume a more subservient visual relationship to the host building, consistent with its ancillary use. The external materials match the remainder of the building.

Although resulting in an intensification of built form the current proposal would not be unacceptably harmful to the appearance of the rear of the building or the character of the surrounding area.

Residential Amenity - Neighbours

The nearest residential properties are those existing at 1A (Flats 1 and 2) and to the east located on the upper floors of nearby Becket Buildings.

The first-floor addition is sited approximately 6m south of a south-facing, bedroom window in the first-floor flat (Flat 1, 1A), and approximately 2.8m south of an east-facing bedroom window in the same flat. The height and 'bulk' of the addition has had an enclosing effect on the outlook from these windows as well as some loss of light (daylight and sunlight). Whilst not ideal, the overall impact is not oppressively overbearing, and the lesser 'bulk' of the current flat roof form is preferable in this respect to the further addition of a pitched roof as previously proposed. The second-floor flat, Flat 2, 1A, is unaffected.

1 Becket Buildings adjoins the east side of the access drive. The ground floor is in commercial/business with a 3-bedroom residential flat (1A) above. The latter accessed from external stairs located in a walled yard at the rear, leading onto a first-floor terrace. Most of the upper floor flats in Becket Buildings have a similar access arrangement to the rear, with external stairs a common feature. The proposed first-floor addition to the existing rear store extends southward beyond the rear wall of 1A Becket Buildings. The proposed east-facing windows positioned at 90º to the south-facing windows in the rear of 1A would not give rise to problematic overlooking.

Access and Highways

No significant highway safety impacts are raised by the proposed 20.3sqm of additional ancillary storage space. There exists a small area of hardstanding in front of the existing garage doors used for parking/deliveries, in addition to the paved forecourt fronting Littlehampton Road.

Recommendation

APPROVE Subject to conditions: -

1. Approved Plans

2. Within 4 months of the date of this decision the internal and external works shown on the approved plans PL2 103A and PL2 106A shall be carried out and completed. The external works of making good shall be carried out in materials and external finishes to match those of the existing building.
3. The first-floor area hereby approved shall not be used other than for storage purposes ancillary to the ground-floor use of 1 Littlehampton Road.

Informative

Pro-active No Amendment

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

Case Officer: Jo Morin Date: 14.04.2025

Authorised by: Louise Prew Date: 14/04//2025