

Development Management – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/0093/26

Recommendation: APPROVE

Site: 13 Christchurch Road Worthing West Sussex

Proposal: Change of use of two self contained flats (Use Class C3) to a small house in multiple occupation (Class C4); with additional window (flats 1 and 2).

Date of Site Visit: 19/03/2026

Neighbours Checked: Y

Additional Neighbours Notified: N

Site and Surroundings

The site is located on the western side of Christchurch Road. It contains a semi-detached two storey dwelling in use as two flats. The ground floor flat has one bedroom and the first floor flat has two bedrooms. A double garage is located to the rear.

Proposal

The proposal is to convert the two flats to a small house in multiple occupation with five bedrooms. Two double bedrooms and three single bedrooms would be provided with a communal living room, kitchen, utility and two bathrooms. The building would be managed by Turning Tides but no full time manager would be located on site.

The only external alteration is a proposed window in the northern elevation to provide light and outlook to bedroom one.

Cycle parking would be provided in the existing rear garage.

Relevant Planning History:

04/00041/FULL - Installation of replacement white PVCu windows and doors to ground and top floor flats

STATUS: Conditional Consent 3rd March 2004.

Consultations

Environmental Health:

I would recommend the following: - Works of construction or demolition, including the use of plant and machinery, necessary for implementation of this consent shall be limited to the following times. Monday - Friday 08:00 - 18:00 Hours Saturday 09:00 - 13:00 Hours Sundays and Bank Holidays no work permitted Any temporary exception to these working hours shall be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority at least five days in advance of works commencing. The contractor shall notify the local

residents in writing at least three days before any such works. Reason: To safeguard the residential amenity of the area

Environmental Health Private Sector Housing: No response

West Sussex County Council as LHA:

This proposal is for the change of use of two self-contained flats (Use Class C3) to a small house in multiple occupation (Class C4). The site is located on Christchurch Road, an unclassified road subject to a speed restriction of 30mph.

There are no proposed changes to access arrangements. The LHA does not anticipate that the change of use would give rise to a significant material intensification of movements to or from the site.

The applicant proposes one car parking space for this development. Under WSCC Parking Standards, the LHA would expect the proposed HMO use to generate a parking demand of 2-3 car parking spaces. Therefore, any overspill parking would have to be accommodated on-street.

Whilst on-street parking is limited in the immediate vicinity, there are comprehensive parking restrictions in place prohibiting vehicles from parking in places that would be a detriment to highway safety. The LHA does not anticipate that the proposed shortfall of car parking provision would result in a detrimental highway safety impact, nor give rise to a parking capacity issue. However, the LPA may wish to consider the potential impacts on on-street parking from an amenity point of view. Weight is given to the fact the site is situated within a sustainable town centre location, within walking distance of public transport links and public car parks.

From inspection of the plans, the parking area is suitably sized. On-site turning does not appear achievable, so cars may have to exit the site in reverse gear. However, this is not anticipated to give rise to an adverse highway safety impact, owing to good forward visibility in this location. An existing garage can be used to provide secure cycle storage.

The site is situated in a sustainable town centre location within walking/cycle distance of local services and amenities. Cycling is a viable option in the area. The site is also well connected by public transport, with regular buses available from Richmond Road. Worthing Train Station is situated approximately 400m north of the site.

The LHA does not consider that this proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network, therefore is not contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 116), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.

WSP (as drainage consultant):

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

Southern Water

As the developer has advised they are proposing to utilise the existing connection, Southern Water will have no objections to the proposed works.

Waste Services: No response

Neighbour Representations

None

Relevant Planning Policies:

Worthing Local Plan policies (WBC 2023): SP1, DM1, DM2, DM5, DM
National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG 2024)
National Planning Practice Guidance
SPG 'Extending or Altering Your Home' (WBC)

Planning Assessment:

Principle of change of use

Policy DM1 seeks to resist the loss of existing homes. The proposal would result in one fewer residential unit. The policy states that "Planning applications that result in the loss of residential accommodation will not be permitted unless one or more of the following exceptions apply". Of the outlined criteria the one most relevant is ... "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".

It is noted that both existing units appear to meet the Technical Housing Standards therefore part iii) of the policy regarding improvements to meet minimum housing standards does not also apply.

The proposal is to change the use to a five-bedroom house in multiple occupation. Policy DM1 sets out the good quality HMOs play an important role in providing housing for people on low incomes, those on benefit payments and young professionals. They are often the only choice of housing for people who would otherwise be homeless. In this case the proposal would provide bedrooms for five people with shared communal facilities. While there would be the net loss of one dwelling, the proposal would likely result in a similar or greater number of people living on site.

This conversion would be achieved through removing an internal wall resulting in a straightforward conversion helping to restore its original character and the provision of one additional window. Therefore, on balance, the benefits in terms of providing this well designed HMO and to the character of the area outweigh the loss, and the proposal is acceptable in principle.

Visual Amenity

A single window on the southern ground floor elevation will be inserted to provide light to bed one. The window would be adjacent to a similar window and would have the same design. It would be visible in views from the street to the north but would not look out of place on this residential building.

Residential Amenity

The conversion to a small HMO is not considered to have an impact on neighbouring amenity as the increase in bedrooms will not result in an intensification of the site which would be materially different to the two units.

The window to the side would face the blank flank wall of the neighbouring property and would not result in any overlooking.

Standard of accommodation

All five bedrooms are above the space standards for a single bedroom. Each window has good outlook and daylight. There are some concerns about the privacy offered to bedroom one on ground floor given the window onto the shared drive only. However, as they are afforded access to communal facilities as well, their overall standard of accommodation is considered acceptable.

Transport

The site is within a sustainable location within close proximity to Worthing town centre and Worthing train station. A car park is retained on site and cycle storage will be provided in the garage. A condition is recommended that three spaces be provided as in this location the required number for a 4 bedroom + property is 2.2.

Drainage

The proposal does not result in a change in the vulnerability of the use on site and there is no increase in impermeable area. The development is therefore acceptable in relation to policy DM20 which relates to flooding.

Community infrastructure levy

The development is not liable for CIL as no additional floorspace is being created.

Recommendation:

APPROVE subject to condition(s):-

1. Drawing Numbers
2. Standard time limit
3. Matching materials
4. Cycle parking
5. Hours of work

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. Mandatory HMO licensing

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

Case Officer: Louise Prew

Date: 23/03/2026

Authorised by: Peter Barnett

Date: 24 March 2026