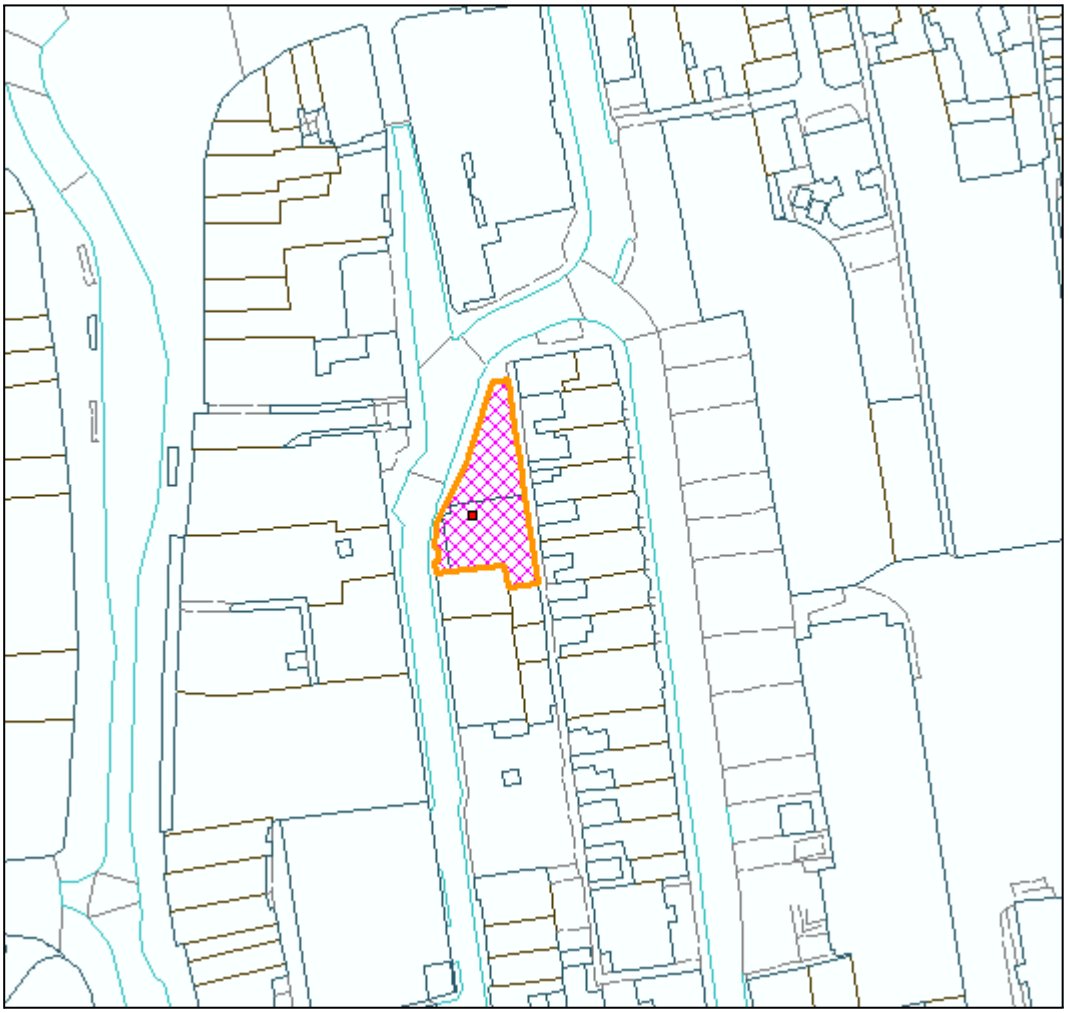
Application Number:	**AWDM/1367/23**	**Recommendation - APPROVE**
Site:	**The Place Drop In Centre, 24 Marine Place, Worthing**	
Proposal:	**Conversion and alterations of existing building to provide 5no. residential apartments with associated works including access, landscaping and associated works and 2no. parking spaces**	
Applicant:	Worthing Borough Council	Ward: Central
Agent:	Robinson Escott Planning	
Case Officer:	James Appleton	



Not to Scale

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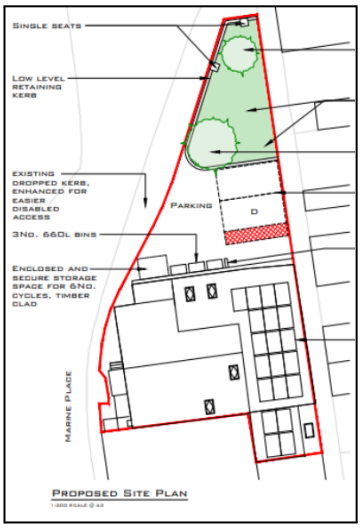
Proposal, Site and Surroundings

The proposal will deliver 5 one bed flats and studios to provide affordable rented accommodation. All units will be accessed off the existing entrance into the building off Marine Place. The ground floor will provide 2 flats with the first floor providing the further 3 flats. In order to convert the building, minor changes are proposed to the external facades of the building.



The proposal will provide 2 parking spaces and associated cycle and refuse storage on the northern section of land as well as landscaping to improve the appearance of the area.

The application site comprises an end of terrace building which has been extended rather unsympathetically in the past. The front façade has flint, render and brick detailing with arched windows. The gabled roof has been disrupted by a series of flat roof additions on the northern and eastern side of the building. There is a small parking area on the northern parcel of the site which is also used for the storage of larger communal bins to serve the local area.

To the north lies Warwick Street, to the east Bedford Row (a terrace of grade II listed buildings) and to the west the rear elevations of shops fronting South Street. The site lies within the South Street Conservation Area.

As the building is owned by Worthing Borough Council and the Council is the applicant for this development, this application has to be considered by Planning Committee rather than be determined under delegated powers.

Applicants Supporting Statement

The applicant has submitted various supporting statements. The Planning Statement and Design and Access Statements conclude that the conversion of the existing building makes the most efficient use of land in line with adopted policies and government guidance. The Planning Statement concludes that,

'There will be a loss of an existing community facility as a result of the development. However, this statement has outlined that the building has been vacant for some time and there are accessible and alternative community facilities in close proximity to the site. Due to the demonstrable need for this type of housing within the Borough, the proposed conversion of the site is assessed as being acceptable in this instance. On this basis the development is in accordance with Policy DM8 Worthing Local Plan 2023.

The proposed conversion will appear harmoniously within the context of the site and will result in a positive addition to the area creating a high quality design which will enhance the character of the area and preserve the setting of the Conservation Area.

The dwellings will provide a good standard of accommodation for future occupiers for the proposed typology.

In terms of residential amenity, the development will preserve the privacy, outlook and light of neighbouring properties.

The site is situated within the PBZ5 area as identified by the West Sussex Guidance on Parking. This requires units with 1-3 habitable rooms to provide 0.6 spaces per dwelling. The development should therefore provide 3no. spaces. Although the proposal will provide 2no. parking spaces on the site, given the proposed tenure of the development and highly sustainable location, the proposed parking provision is acceptable in this instance.

Through the preparation of technical reports, it has been outlined that the proposal is acceptable in terms of heritage and flood risk and drainage.

In view of the above, it is concluded that the development proposed in this application is consistent with the aims and detailed requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and the Development Plan and as such, should be given planning permission.'

An Energy Statement in support of the application concludes that,

'It has been demonstrated that it is technically feasible for the proposed flats at Marine Place to achieve an EPC rating, and carbon reduction performance that exceeds the Worthing Local Plan requirements and the fabric performance achieved exceeds the Part L requirements for a "change of use".

PV provides a valuable contribution to the energy needs of the properties and meeting the requirement for 10% contribution appears to be feasible despite the limited accessible flat roof space.'

Relevant Planning History

Planning permission granted in 1996 under Regulation 3 to convert the property to a youth drop in and information centre (96/05489/WBR3).

Consultations

West Sussex County Council Highways Authority comment that,

"This application has been dealt with in accordance with the Development Control Scheme protocol for small scale proposals.

Summary
This application seeks the conversion and alteration of existing D1 Use building to provide five residential apartments with associated works. The site is located on Marine Place, an unclassified road subject to a speed restriction of 30 mph. Following an inspection of the submitted application documents, WSCC in its role as

Local Highway Authority (LHA) raises no highway safety concerns for this application.

Access and Visibility
The application site will make use of the existing dropped kerb access point, of which will be enhanced for easier disabled access. It is unclear if this means works will be taking place within the maintained highway – clarification should be provided if this is the case. The applicant should be aware that any works within the highway will be subject to a licence obtained through the local Highway Area Office.

From inspection of WSCC mapping, there are no apparent visibility concerns with the existing access point on Marine Place. In addition, the proposed development is not anticipated to give rise to a material intensification of movements to or from the site.

Parking and Turning
The plans demonstrate off-street parking for two cars. On-site turning does not appear achievable, so cars may have to exit in a reverse gear – however, this is not anticipated to give rise to an adverse highway safety impact, owing to suitable visibility afforded by the access point.

The WSCC Car Parking Demand Calculator indicates that a development of this size and location would require three car parking spaces. Therefore, any overspill parking would have to be accommodated on-street.

Whilst on-street parking is limited in the area, 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 shortfall of one car parking space would give rise to a highway safety concern or parking capacity issue, but the LPA may wish to consider the potential amenity impacts. Weight is given to the fact the site is situated in a sustainable location whereby residents need not rely on the private car.

Regarding cycles, the plans demonstrate secure cycle parking provision for six cycles in accordance with WSCC Parking Standards.

Sustainability
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 bus services available from nearby South Street and Marine Parade. Worthing Railway Station is located approximately 1km north of the site.

Conclusion
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 111), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.

If the LPA are minded to approve the application, the following conditions and informative should be applied:

Conditions
Car parking space (details approved)
No part of the development shall be first occupied until the car parking has been constructed in accordance with the approved site plan. These spaces shall thereafter be retained at all times for their designated purpose. Reason: To provide car-parking space for the use.

Cycle parking
No part of the development shall be first occupied until covered and secure cycle parking spaces have been provided in accordance with plans and details to be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. Reason: To provide alternative travel options to the use of the car in accordance with current sustainable transport policies.

Informative
Vehicle Crossover – Minor Highway Works
The applicant is advised that in addition to obtaining planning permission that they must also obtain formal approval from the highway authority to carry out the site access works on the public highway. The granting of planning permission does not guarantee that a vehicle crossover licence shall be granted."

Adur & Worthing Councils:

The ***Environmental Health Private Sector Housing*** comments that,

"Please could the following informative be placed on any planning permission that may be granted.

The Private Sector Housing team of Adur & Worthing Councils have identified that some aspects of the development may result in hazards that require action under the Housing Act 2004. Typical hazards can include 'inner' rooms (where the only means of escape in the case of fire is through another risk room i.e. bedroom, living room, kitchen, etc.) or where there are inadequate windows or outlook from habitable rooms.

In this case, lobbies and fire doors have been placed in the first floor flats for no reason reducing the options available for better layouts. It is not clear whether the walls separating the bedrooms from the rest of the flat in Flats 3 & 5 are dwarf walls for spatial delineation only, but it effectively makes the bedroom in Flat 3 an inner room and provides no window to the bedroom of Flat 4. The bedroom in Flat 5 has no outlook at all with only rooflights for natural light, but ineffective at providing ventilation. The outlook from the ground floor flats is poor looking only onto a narrow back alleyway, compounded by obscured glass.

Compliance with Building Regulations will not necessarily address the hazards identified and you should contact the Private Sector Housing team to confirm that the

layout of the property is acceptable prior to commencing the development in order to avoid the need for any formal intervention or the requirement of retrospective works."

Southern Water comment that,

"Southern Water requires a formal application for a connection to the public sewer to be made by the applicant or developer. To make an application visit Southern Water's Get Connected service: developerservices.southernwater.co.uk and please read our New Connections Charging Arrangements documents which are available on our website via the following link:
southernwater.co.uk/developing-building/connection-charging-arrangements

In situations where surface water is being considered for discharge to our network, we require the below hierarchy for surface water to be followed which is reflected in part H3 of the Building Regulations. Whilst reuse does not strictly form part of this hierarchy, Southern Water would encourage the consideration of reuse for new developments.

- *Reuse*
- *Infiltration*
- *Watercourse*
- *Storm sewer*
- *Combined Sewer*

Guidance on Building Regulations is here:
gov.uk/government/publications/drainage-and-waste-disposal-approved-document-h

It is possible that a sewer now deemed to be public could be crossing the development site. Therefore, should any sewer be found during construction works, an investigation of the sewer will be required to ascertain its ownership before any further works commence on site."

West Sussex as the Local Lead Flood Authority (LLFA) *comments that,*

"The applicant is applying for the conversion and alterations of an existing building to provide 5 residential apartments with associated works including access, landscaping and 2 parking spaces.

Following a review of the submitted information, we would recommend the approval of the application with the following conditions attached:

Condition 1*: Construction shall not begin until a detailed surface water drainage scheme for the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The surface water drainage scheme must prioritise the use of source control Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in consideration of the NonStatutory Technical Standards for SuDS and demonstrate no increase in flood risk as a result of the Proposed Development with sufficient supporting evidence provided to support its viability including supporting calculations for the 100% AEP (1 in 1 year), 3.33% AEP (1 in 30 year), 3.33% AEP (1 in 30 year) plus climate change, the 1% AEP (1 in 100 year) and the 1% AEP (1 in 100) plus climate change critical*

storms. The scheme shall subsequently be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the development is completed.

Reason: To ensure the flood risk is adequately addressed and not increased in accordance with NPPF and Policies of Adur and Worthing Council.

***Condition 2**: Prior to the first use of the development a Flood Evacuation Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing to the Local Planning Authority.*

Reason: To ensure the flood risk is adequately addressed, not increased and users remain safe for the lifetime of the development in accordance with NPPF and Policies of Adur & Worthing Council."

The ***Worthing Society*** comment that,

"This Regency building, circa 1827, and originally a 'Providence Methodist Chapel', is located within the South Street Conservation Area (CA). It occupies an important corner site at the apex of Bedford Row and Marine Place.

I have now had the opportunity to discuss the plans with our Heritage Team and we are broadly supportive of the change of use to residential accommodation. We are also pleased to note that the proposed design will retain the historic flint façade and character of the original chapel which is a significant element. Some further detail to the upper storey windows (preferably in a timber frame) to reflect the building's history would be a welcome consideration.

There is an adjacent parking area and rough ground which has become very run down. The proposed landscaping and new parking bay for this site will be an improvement to this part of the CA and will, in our opinion, help to restore the 'street scene'. The landscaping design will complement the recent residential developments in Marine Place. For some time the northern end of Marine Place has become rather dilapidated and unappealing. The landscaping will be a welcome element and will also improve the 'setting' of the Listed Buildings at the rear of Bedford Row.

Overall the proposal looks to be a beneficial way forward for both the future use of the building and this part of the CA. However, we do note the concerns of the Environmental Public Health Sector in their Consultation response regarding the layout of the accommodation. Although this is somewhat outside our remit, we consider these aspects will need to be sufficiently addressed as the plans move forward."

Representations

One letter of objection has been submitted raising the following concerns:

- Highway Access and Parking: However I am querying the redevelopment of the parking area. It would be beneficial to keep more than 2 spaces rather than taking them away and make these spaces part of Zone A, it gets harder to find a space. I saw that Zone Z round Steyne Gardens which used to be Zone A previously is now going to Zone C? There is planning for new residential

housing further down the road which will not include any parking at all being for in town living with bicycle sheds surely that would follow suit with these flats too?

- Loss of General Amenity: The other question is what will happen to the rubbish bins with the redevelopment? The ones in Bedford Row have already been moved there (for a rather random NCP car park of 3 spaces) and we now have less actual bins in total and potentially more people using them. Has this been considered? As it looked like a garden area was being located in that spot on the plans?
- Comment on the amended plans: The only change I noticed was that rather than just two bins initially there will now be one more bin making three in total. My question: are these bins just for the revamped building or the existing bin area being relocated? It doesn't seem to specify? We already have three bins at the moment where the 'garden area' is planned to go. Plus two recycling bins and ideally we really need either another large recycling or a third smaller one. I can't see where those bins are going? As it is when the bins are full and overflowing the seagulls are a nightmare tearing bags apart with rubbish everywhere and this is not very healthy or environmentally friendly so we definitely do not want any less than we currently have and requires consideration.

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Worthing Local Plan 2020-2036:

DM1 Housing Mix; DM2 Density; DM3 Affordable Housing
DM5 Quality of the Built Environment; DM6 Public Realm; DM7 Open Space, Recreation and Leisure; DM8 Delivering Infrastructure; DM13 Retail & Town Centre Uses; DM15 Sustainable Transport & Active Travel; DM16 Sustainable Design: DM17 Energy: DM18 Biodiversity: DM19 Green Infrastructure; DM20 Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage: DM21 Sustainable Water Use & Quality: DM22 Pollution; DM23 Strategic Approach To The Historic Environment: DM24 The Historic Environment

Supplementary Planning Document ‘Space Standards’ (WBC 2012)
Supplementary Planning Document ‘Sustainable Economy’ (WBC 2012)
‘Infrastructure Delivery Plan’ (WBC 2010)

Relevant Legislation

The Committee should consider the planning application in accordance with:

Section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) provides that the application may be granted either unconditionally or subject to relevant conditions, or refused. Regard shall be given to relevant development plan policies, any relevant local finance considerations, and other material considerations

For Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas

Section 73A and also Section 72 Planning (Listed Building & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which require the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the appearance of the Conservation Area.

Section 38(6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 that requires the decision to be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Planning Assessment

The main issues in this case are:

- the loss of a community facility;
- whether the conversion provides an acceptable form of accommodation for new residents and does not have an unacceptable impact on adjoining residents;
- Impact on the setting of heritage assets and the Conservation Area;
- Access and Car parking;
- Sustainability and,
- Biodiversity.

Loss of Community Use

Regarding the loss of a community facility the supporting statement indicates that the building was leased to West Sussex County Council (WSCC) who used the building for many years but ended their tenancy on 13 July 2021. WSCC had been using the building as a “Find-it-out” youth information service as a result of a costing cutting exercise this service was moved to the newly renovated Worthing Library. Adur and Worthing Councils used the venue for a Youth employment hub (18-24 yrs) from August 2021 - April 2022 but when funding was cut for this service it also closed down. The building has had no formal use since and is currently vacant.

Normally the Council would require some degree of marketing of the premises to ascertain whether the building could continue to provide a community use. However, in this instance the Council has assessed that there are few alternative community uses suitable for the building (particularly given the need to undertake repairs and essential maintenance. Furthermore it is recognised that the provision of affordable housing would offset any loss of any potential community use of the building given the significant housing need that exists for affordable housing. The Housing team has confirmed that these flats would directly benefit those on the Councils waiting lists and would provide much needed rented accommodation.

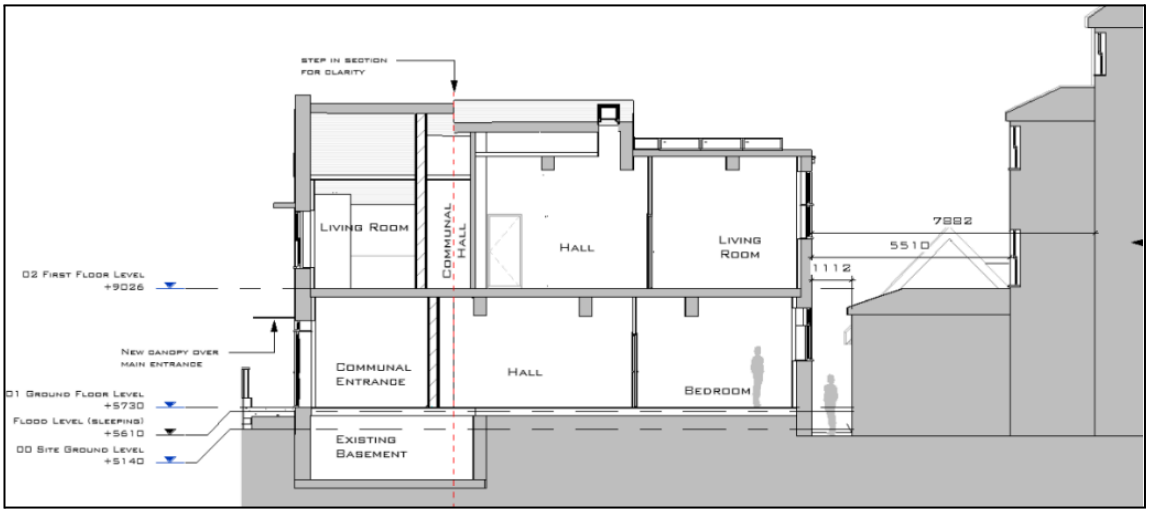
In the circumstances there is considered to be sufficient justification for the loss of this community facility.

Residential Amenity

It is considered that the building provides a reasonable level of accommodation given the difficulties of converting an existing building and its close proximity to

properties to the east in Bedford Row. All flats meet Nationally Described Space Standards with appropriately proportioned rooms for future occupiers. All rooms are either served by facing windows, or where this has not been possible, roof lights have been added, to ensure adequate levels of light and outlook for residents.

In response to some concerns about the internal layout from the Private Sector Housing team, the applicant has agreed various amendments to improve outlook from flats and addressed issues regarding height of partition walls and fire lobbies. The Private Sector Housing team are now happy with the latest amendments. A new south facing window is proposed at first floor level to provide light to a bedroom and obscure glazing removed at ground floor level. Although the removal of obscure glazing raises the potential for overlooking from Bedford Row and the footpath immediately to the east, the difference in levels means that this is not an issue and these windows already exist along this boundary. This is illustrated by the cross section shown below:



The Housing team has also indicated that should overlooking become an issue for any of the properties to the east they could always install obscure glazing at a later date. Although gardens are not proposed for any of the flats this is not an issue in this town centre location. However, the scheme does provide landscaping part of the existing car park which would enhance this rather unattractive corner site. The computer generated image submitted in support of the application illustrates what is proposed.



It is considered that the amended plans provide a reasonable standard of accommodation given the constraints of the site and would not have an adverse impact on the amenities of residents nearby. There has been some concern about the loss of communal bins for Bedford Row properties and the Councils Waste Services Manager has been asked to comment on where these bins would be relocated.

Impact on the setting of heritage assets and the Conservation Area

As only minimum alterations are proposed to the building to facilitate the conversion it is not considered that the scheme has any impact on the setting of adjoining listed buildings or the Conservation Area. The scheme would overall enhance the appearance of the building with improvements to windows and the ramped access into the property. Furthermore, the reduction in hard surfacing and proposed landscaping of part of the existing car park would be a significant improvement to the Conservation Area and setting of Bedford Row.

The Conservation Area appraisal makes particular mention of the surface car parks affecting the setting of the listed buildings and Conservation Area generally and the proposed scheme is to be applauded. This area of the town is being greatly improved with a number of schemes approved over the last 3 years providing additional residential accommodation fronting onto Marine Place.

Access and Car parking

The Highway Authority has no objection to the scheme. Although the proposal would reduce the number of parking spaces, car parking ownership is low in the town centre particularly for affordable housing and Officers were keen to encourage soft landscaping rather than additional parking spaces. Town Centre car clubs and proximity to public transport would provide viable alternatives and covered cycle parking is provided in accordance with WSCC standards.

Sustainability

The re-use of the existing building rather than demolition is welcomed here given the carbon that is captured in existing buildings. In addition, the applicant has confirmed that the Local Plan requirements will be met and exceeded in relation to thermal efficiency and generating 10% of future energy needs through the use of photovoltaic panels.

Biodiversity

Given that the existing site lacks any biodiversity the landscaped pocket ‘garden’ will help to ensure that the 10% net gain can be achieved. This can be secured by a planning condition.

Recommendation

It is recommended that planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the satisfactory comments of the Waste Services Manager and subject to the following conditions:

1. Approved Plans

2. Car parking space (details approved) - No part of the development shall be first occupied until the car parking has been constructed in accordance with the approved site plan. These spaces shall thereafter be retained at all times for their designated purpose.

3. Cycle parking - No part of the development shall be first occupied until covered and secure cycle parking spaces have been provided in accordance with plans and details to be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

4. Landscaping scheme to be submitted and approved.

5. Construction shall not begin until a detailed surface water drainage scheme for the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The surface water drainage scheme must prioritise the use of source control Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in consideration of the NonStatutory Technical Standards for SuDS and demonstrate no increase in flood risk as a result of the Proposed Development with sufficient supporting evidence provided to support its viability including supporting calculations for the 100% AEP (1 in 1 year), 3.33% AEP (1 in 30 year), 3.33% AEP (1 in 30 year) plus climate change, the 1% AEP (1 in 100 year) and the 1% AEP (1 in 100) plus climate change critical storms. The scheme shall subsequently be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the development is completed.

6. Prior to the first use of the development a Flood Evacuation Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing to the Local Planning Authority.

7. Prior to the commencement of development precise details of replacement windows shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA.

8. Provision of parking and covered cycle spaces in accordance with the approved plans and retained for the use of occupants of the development.

9. Provision and management of landscaped area to deliver the 10% biodiversity net gain.

10. Sustainable design features to be incorporated into the development in accordance with the submitted Energy Statement prior to occupation of the development.

Informatives

WSCC (Vehicle Crossover – Minor Highway Works)

The applicant is advised that in addition to obtaining planning permission that they must also obtain formal approval from the highway authority to carry out the site access works on the public highway. The granting of planning permission does not guarantee that a vehicle crossover licence shall be granted."

Southern Water
It is possible that a sewer now deemed to be public could be crossing the development site. Therefore, should any sewer be found during construction works, an investigation of the sewer will be required to ascertain its ownership before any further works commence on site.

20 December 2023

Local Government Act 1972
Background Papers:

As referred to in individual application reports

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