Expiry Date - 09/05/2025

Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/0263/25 **Recommendation – REFUSE**

Site: **9 Latimer Road Worthing West Sussex BN11 5EP**

Proposal: **Use of first floor flat as holiday let**

Date of site visit: 09.04.2025

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: N

Site and Surroundings

The application relates to a purpose-built, 2-bedroom, first-floor flat within a 2-storey block of 4 units located on the south side of Latimer Road. The flat is accessed by external stairs on the east side. A private drive on the east side of the building leads to garaging and separate rear garden areas belonging to No.9 and the ground-floor flat (No.7).

Latimer Road is residential in character, made up of a mix of detached houses and bungalows with some low-rise purpose-built flats of differing architectural styles and age. The seafront and promenade is located approximately 220 metres to the south.

The property is not listed or locally listed and is not within a conservation area. There are no TPO trees on the site.

Proposal

Permission is sought to use the property as a holiday flat. The Applicant intends to use the property as their own holiday home and is also seeking to let it out as a short-term rental on Airbnb and Booking.com for up to 4no guests.

No external alterations are proposed.

Relevant Planning History: None

Consultations:

WSCC: The Local Highway Authority has raised no objections on highway safety grounds commenting: -

"This application seeks the change of use of first floor flat as holiday let. The site is located on Latimer Road, an unclassified road subject to a speed restriction of 30 mph.

No alterations are proposed to the existing vehicular access point on Latimer Road. The proposed change of use is not anticipated to give rise to a material intensification of use of the existing access point.

The site benefits from an existing shared drive, which can accommodate an appropriate amount of off-street car parking provision to serve the site, as per the existing residential use. The existing garage could be utilised for the storage of bicycles if not used for car parking, but the LPA may wish to secure separate cycle storage facilities for visitors to use if they deem it appropriate to do so.

The site is situated in a sustainable location within walking/cycle distance of local services, amenities and public transport connections.

In summary, 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: The Council's drainage consultant has no objection.

Adur and Worthing Councils

The EHO (Public Health) recommends the following condition in the event of approval to reduce the likelihood of noise affecting nearby residential amenity:

Prior to the approved use of the premises, a Noise Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The Noise Management Plan, designed to prevent disturbance to local residents resulting from the hereby permitted use of the property, shall include undertakings and procedures for:

i. The name(s) of a supervisor responsible for the behaviour of guests and for liaison with local residents;
ii. The control and use of any outside areas (if applicable);
iii. The control of noise break out from within the building;
iv. Access and egress to and from the property by guests including arrangements for parking;
v. Recording of complaints and response to those complaints;
vi. The annual review of the approved Noise Management Plan and, if necessary, the submission and approval of a revised Noise Management Plan;
vii. Any other matters that are reasonably required by the local planning authority.

Representations:

An objection has been received from a neighbour commenting that the residential location is not suitable for a short-term holiday let and the proposal will result in the loss of affordable first-time buyer accommodation.

Relevant Planning Policies

Worthing Local Plan 2020-2036 (WBC 2023): Policies:
SP1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development)
SS1 (Spatial Strategy)
DM1 (Housing Mix)
DM5 (Quality of the Built Environment)
DM12 (The Visitor Economy)

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

Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

The key issue is the loss of residential accommodation. The Applicant has stated that they would use the property as their own holiday home but has given no indication of the duration/frequency of their use.

The property would be advertised on short-term rental platforms Airbnb and Booking.com.

Local Plan policy DM1 states at point e)
e) The Council will seek to resist any net loss of existing residential accommodation (Use Class C3). Planning applications that result in the loss of residential accommodation will not be permitted unless one or more of the following exceptions apply:

i) it can be demonstrated that the accommodation cannot be renovated to achieve satisfactory housing standards;
ii) the proposal would result in a net gain in units of affordable housing;
iii) loss would enable residential units to be enlarged to meet residential space standards;
iv) the proposed change of use will provide a local community service/facility that meets an identified need;
v) it can be demonstrated that a proposed change of use is the only practicable way of preserving the special architectural or historic interest of a listed building or other building of heritage significance; or
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.

The Local Plan (paragraph 3.13) sets out the most up-to-date assessment of objectively assessed housing need (based on the standard method as set out in national planning guidance and the 2014 household projections published in September 2016) as 14,160 dwellings over the Plan period (2020 to 2036) which currently equates to 885 dwellings per annum.

Whilst the Local Plan seeks to plan positively to increase housing delivery, the constraints of land availability which derive not least from the geography of the Borough (with the sea to the south and National Park to the north) provides limited opportunities for a supply of housing sites necessary to close the gap between the level of identified need and recent housing delivery levels. Given the limited amount of land available for new residential development it is therefore important to retain existing housing in full time use.

Whilst the Applicant has indicated the property would not be used full-time as a short-term holiday let, it would nevertheless effectively sterilise the property for permanent, much-needed housing contrary to LP policy.

There is a legitimate need to support visitor accommodation in the Town and the Borough has seen new and/or expanded hotel provision in recent years (including the 83-room Premier Inn on Worthing seafront, a new 14-bedroom hotel at the Coach & Horses PH on Arundel Road, an additional 18 guest rooms developed at The Railway Hotel, and refurbished guest rooms at The Brewhouse + Kitchen close to the Town Centre). However, there has also been a loss of some long-established visitor accommodation, most specifically guesthouse and B&B accommodation. Whilst new models of visitor accommodation secured through online booking platforms such as Airbnb and Booking.com adds to the overall variety of accommodation available to visitors it can negatively impact the viability of existing providers, particularly guesthouse and B&B accommodation which are often subject to more stringent regulations and additional costs. The form of visitor accommodation proposed has the potential to further contribute to their demise.

Residential Amenity - Neighbours

The 2-bedroom flat would be capable of accommodating up to 4 guests, plus use of the rear garden, with onsite parking accessed by a shared driveway.

The use of the accommodation (and garden area) by holidaymakers would likely be different in character to the current residential use, with the travel pattern of guests likely to differ, as well as the behavioural characteristics of guests, resulting in a greater propensity for associated noise and activity to disturb neighbours. The floor/ceiling and internal wall sound insulation qualities of these mid-C20 flats is unknown but unlikely to adhere to modern standards.

The EHO has recommended a Management Plan as a means of controlling disturbance. However, the guests would change on a constant basis and the Applicant would not live at or close to the property to oversee such a plan.

Consequently, it is not considered such a measure would provide a reliable means of managing the risk of disturbance which could occur at any time. The use of the first-floor flat as holiday-let accommodation would likely have a significant adverse effect on the amenities of the occupiers of the neighbouring flats.

Access and Highways

The LHA has not raised any objection any highway safety grounds noting that the proposal would be unlikely to result in an increased intensity of use of the existing access point and would provide an adequate amount of off-street parking provision. In fact, the characteristics of occupation, associated travel patterns and intensity of use would likely differ the current residential use and the shared nature of the vehicle access drive and lack of turning space also has the potential to making manoeuvring of vehicles within the site difficult. Whilst not necessarily a highway safety concern it nevertheless further highlights the potential for conflict and resultant disturbance to the occupier of the ground-floor flat in particular.

Recommendation

REFUSE for the reason: -

1. The proposed use as holiday let accommodation would result in the unacceptable loss of a much-needed residential dwelling contrary to policy DM1 of the Worthing Local Plan.

2. The proposed use as holiday let accommodation would likely give rise to increased noise and disturbance that would unacceptably detract from the living conditions of neighbouring residential occupiers contrary to policies DM5 and DM12 of the Worthing Local Plan.

Informative

Pro-active Refusal – No discussion

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

Case Officer: Jo Morin Date: 01.05.2025

Authorised by: Louise Prew Date: 01/05/2025