Development Management - Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/1132/21 Recommendation – Approve

Site: 40 North Road, Lancing

Proposal: Change of use from vacant shop (use class E) to betting office (sui generis)

Date of site visit: Not visited. Assessed using Google Maps

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: N

Proposal, Site and Surroundings

The application relates to the ground floor of 40 North Road, a detached two storey building located on the east side of North Road, within the Primary Shopping Area of Lancing. It was previously in use as a Post Office which has closed and relocated to a smaller unit to the south. It has been vacant since 2017.

It is proposed to change the use of the ground floor from retail use (Class E) to a betting office (sui generis).

Relevant Planning History

AWDM/1159/21 - Proposed new shopfront together with the installation of 4 no. air conditioning condenser units to north elevation; 2 no satellite dishes to south elevation - application currently invalid

AWDM/1160/21 - 2no. internally illuminated fascia signs and 1no. internally illuminated projecting sign - pending consideration

Consultations

West Sussex County Council: The **Highways Authority** has no objection. The site does not benefit from an existing vehicular access and as such, no parking is proposed for the betting office use. The LHA acknowledge the sustainable location of the site, with a bus stop directly on the site frontage, proximity to other local shops and services, and within walking distance of Lancing Train Station. Whilst on-street car parking is limited in the immediate vicinity there are comprehensive parking restrictions prohibiting vehicles from parking in places that would be detrimental to highway safety. We would not consider that highway safety would be detrimentally affected through the proposed nil car parking provision. The Planning Authority may wish to consider the potential impacts of this development on on-street car parking from an amenity point of view. Given the existing retail use of the site and that staff and visitors to the existing use would arrive by foot, the LHA anticipate that the level of traffic generated would be of a similar nature. 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 109), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.

Adur and Worthing Councils: Public Health: No comments received

Planning Policy Manager: The Adur Local Plan 2017 indicates that the site is located within the designated Primary Shopping Area and Primary retail frontage, specifically block 2;Policy 9: Lancing applies. In this location we normally seek A1, A3, A4 and appropriate D1 uses in certain circumstances, whereas this use is sui generis.

I note that the relevant company seeks to amalgamate two existing betting shops in the area into this one premises; the unit has been vacant since 2017; the unit is large and does not benefit from a 'normal' shopfront; and marketing has not generated any realistic offers. I understand that the marketing has not been carried out for the normal period of 1 year, but given the current economic circumstances and the particulars of this case as outlined above, there is no policy objection.

Lancing Parish Council: The Parish Council request the façade of the building continue to incorporate the Council clock and historical elements of the building

Representations

4 letters of objection received:

Lancing long has a reputation of being a 'chavvy' or a down and out village, literally the last thing we need to help this image is a large betting shop. With the closure of so many shops in the area it has already become a joke what a charity shop ally it is! Also I worry how many young children and teens travel past here to schools and a gambling location especially in lack of other shops would not be a good advertisement for them, gambling addiction is an ever increasing problem in young people.
Our village centre should be a community hub. We have lost many of the spaces that encourage a good healthy community. Are betting shops and takeaways the right way to build this? We have lost our banks, our main post offices, our lovely Echo yoga studio is having to go because of landlord issues... think about what kind of village centre we want.
Give Lancing something it NEEDS! A gambling facility is not what we need. Planning has been granted for more takeaway outlets than is necessary. Financial institutions have all left empty buildings. The news reports have horror stories of the dangers of junk food and gambling so to agree to this application is surely very shortsighted.
There are enough betting shops in Lancing considering the population. If this is approved the council will be contributing to Lancing people turning into gamblers causing debt. Alongside the vast amount of takeaways the health of Lancing will be dire. The beautiful old post office building needs to be used for something that will enhance Lancing.

Relevant Planning Policies

Adur Local Plan 2017 Policy 9, 27
National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019)

Planning Assessment

Principle

Policy 9 of the ALP states that:

"*Development within the primary and secondary frontages of Lancing village centre (as shown on the Policies Map) will need to be in accordance with the following:*
Within the primary frontages of blocks 1, 2 (excluding Queensway Shopping Precinct) and 3, the following uses will be acceptable at ground floor level, subject to compliance with other relevant policies:
A1 (shops) A3 (food and drink) and A4 (drinking establishments) and appropriate D1 (non-residential institutions) uses where there is a long term vacancy (normally a minimum of 1 year) and reasonable attempts have been made to sell or let the premises for A1 use.

Any other uses will be resisted."

The site lies within primary frontage 2 and the proposal will result in the loss of a retail use (Use Classes A1 and A3 now coming within the new Class E, Class A4 deleted and now a sui generis use). As such, a sui generis use such as now proposed would normally be resisted. However, it is noted that the proposed betting office would be replacing two others in the town (at 48/50 North Road and 20 South Street) and that there would therefore be an overall net reduction from two to one such premises.

Furthermore, there has been a long term vacancy of more than 3 years and marketing evidence submitted with the application suggests that there is little interest in using it for retail use in the future. It should be noted that marketing appears to only have commenced in October 2020 (8 months) but the findings so far suggest the unit is too large, does not benefit from a traditional shopfront and the main accessible entrance is at the side of the building.

The supporting information submitted with the application also states that the changes to the Use Classes Order have introduced greater flexibility in town centre uses, including previous non A-Class uses such as medical services, creche facilities, indoor sport and recreation and offices. This proposal would bring a vacant unit back into use, adding to the footfall and supporting the vitality and viability of the town centre. It would not result in a cluster of uses, as the existing two Ladbrokes premises would be closing and relocated to this building.

On balance, while the sui generis use is not policy compliant, it is considered that the material considerations referred to above justify the granting of permission for the change of use in principle. The use will ensure that a large unit in the street, which has sat empty for several years, will be occupied and generate footfall to the town centre, aiding recovery post-Covid.

Visual amenity
This application is for a change of use only and external alterations and signage are subject of separate applications. In response to the Parish Council's comments, however, the agent has confirmed that the clock is to be retained.

Residential amenity

The agent has confirmed that the upper floors are still owned by the Post Office and do not form part of the demise which Ladbrokes would seek to take. It is understood that the offices are used in association with the sorting office at the rear of the building.

Being a detached building with no residential uses attached or above, it is not considered that the proposed use will cause any loss of residential amenity.

The proposed use would close at 10pm, as per the existing Ladbrokes premises in the town.

Recommendation

APPROVE

Subject to Conditions:-

1. Approved Plans
2. Standard 3 year time limit
3. Hours of opening 8am-10pm every day

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

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.

Case Officer:	Peter Barnett	Date: 22 July 2021
Authorised by:	Gary Peck	Date: 22 July 2021