

TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

17 LIVERPOOL GARDENS, WORTHING, BN11 1RY

**CHANGE OF USE FROM CLASS E(g)(i) OFFICES TO CLASS F1(a)
PROVISION OF EDUCATION**



PLANNING AND HERITAGE STATEMENT v1

03 December 2025

CONTENTS

1.	Introduction	2
2.	The Application Site	3
3.	Proposed Development	4
4.	Planning Policy Context	8
5.	Consideration of Planning Policies	9
	5.1 Principle of the Development	9
	5.3 Heritage	11
	5.4 Transport and Highways	12
	5.5 Amenity	12
6.	Summary and Conclusions	13

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The applicant, Educate U West Sussex Ltd, is a specialist school providing high quality, full-time education for 40 children and young people aged 5 to 16 with a wide range of complex needs. All the students at Educate U have an Education, Health and Care (EHCP) plan, a legally binding document for children and young people up to age 25 with special educational needs or disabilities.
- 1.2 The main school is based at 58 Chapel Road, which located 160 metres to the north of the application site, 17 Liverpool Gardens. In January 2025, Worthing Borough Council (WBC) granted planning permission for the change of use of 19 Liverpool Gardens, from a Class E commercial use to educational provision. 17 Liverpool Gardens has now become the school's speech and language and occupational therapy centre.
- 1.3 The opportunity for Educate U West Sussex to acquire the lease on the adjoining property, 17 Liverpool Gardens, has arisen, and as a result this application proposes the change of use of no. 17 from commercial to educational use. This would allow Educate U to expand into the adjoining premises, creating a science lab and classroom space, for an additional 24 students.
- 1.4 The planning application comprises the following documents and plans by Krona Design:

Application Form

Planning, Design & Access Statement v.1 by DJM Town Planning Ltd

Transport Statement by GTA Civils, ref: 14093, Nov 2025

Plans by Krona Design:

KD.1773_A.001 Site and Location Plan

KD.1773_A.100 Existing Plans

KD.1773_A.101 Proposed Plans

2. THE APPLICATION SITE

- 2.1 17 Liverpool Gardens forms the western end of a two-storey brick built building on the north side of Liverpool Gardens in an established mixed-use area in Worthing town centre. The building has yellow brick elevations inset with red brick patterning, slate roof, gabled frontage and side elevation with white painted barge boards, decorative stone lintels and timber sliding sash windows.
- 2.2 To the west side is a small car park for eight vehicles bordered by a low flint and brick wall. A timber framed glazed extension with lead lined roof on the west elevation serves as the main entrance to the premises.
- 2.3 The site is located in the Chapel Road Conservation Area.
- 2.4 The premises is in Use Class E(g)(i) offices for commercial, business and services uses. It was occupied until very recently by a community bank. It is not known how many people worked in the building when it was last occupied, but 12 employees is an estimate based on typical office employment density for 175.1 sqm GIA of offices.
- 2.5 Inside, the accommodation is arranged over two floors. The premises extends to 175.1 sqm GIA. The accommodation comprises:
- Ground Floor: entrance lobby leading to reception / office, corridor with a further two offices, WC, small kitchen and stairs to first floor.
 - First Floor: four offices, WC and doorway through to first floor of 19 Liverpool Gardens.

3. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 The application proposes the change of use of the premises from Class E (commercial, business and services) to Class F1(a) (provision of education), with ancillary office space for the school. No physical alterations are necessary to facilitate the change of use.
- 3.2 The expansion of the main school campus into 17 Liverpool Gardens will provide space for an additional 24 students and 16 staff. The proposed floor plans by Krona Design KD.1773_A,101 show the floor areas of each of the classrooms, and the maximum capacity for each room in terms of staff and students.
- 3.3 The glazed entrance lobby on the west side of the building, and the first office that it leads into, will become an office and reception for the school. The other six rooms will be converted to classrooms.
- 3.4 The school extension will fit seamlessly with the speech and language and occupational therapy centre at 19 Liverpool Gardens, with direct access between the two premises already available from the corridor on the first floor. See floor plans for details.



Figure 1: 17 Liverpool Gardens



Figure 2: Car park to the west of the building, and main entrance on the right



Figure 3: Vacated office space on the first floor



Figure 4: First floor office



Figure 5: Staff kitchen



Figure 6: Meeting room

4. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 4.1 The development plan for the area comprises the Worthing Local Plan 2020 – 2036 (adopted March 2023).
- 4.2 The site is in the town centre and secondary shopping frontage, within the Built Up Area Boundary (BUAB), and the Chapel Road Conservation Area.
- 4.3 Relevant policies in the Local Plan:
- SS1 Spatial strategy
 - SP1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development
 - DM5 Quality of the built environment
 - DM8 Planning for sustainable communities and community facilities
 - DM11 Protecting and enhancing employment sites
 - DM13 Retail and town centre uses
 - DM15 Sustainable travel
 - DM22 Pollution
 - DM23 Strategic approach to the historic environment
 - DM24 Historic environment

5. CONSIDERATION OF PLANNING POLICIES

5.1 Principle of the Development

- 5.1.1 Local Plan policy DM8 supports improvements to health, education, social, community and cultural facilities to ensure they meet the needs of local communities where it is demonstrated that there would be no unacceptable impact on the occupiers of adjacent properties. It adds that the Council will work with service providers to deliver appropriate facilities in accessible locations. Proposals by service providers for the delivery of facilities in appropriate locations, to meet the needs generated by new development and existing communities, will be supported in principle.
- 5.1.2 Policy DM13 states that changes of use and redevelopments within town, district and local centres will be carefully controlled to ensure that they support, rather than detract from, the successful functioning of the centres and their ability to meet local needs. When considering new uses, regard is had to eleven criteria, including the degree to which the use makes a positive contribution to the vitality, viability and diversity of the town centre.
- 5.1.3 The site is within a secondary shopping frontage. In secondary shopping frontages, a wider range of uses will be supported, provided they are active uses with active shop fronts that will enhance the vitality and viability and complement existing uses (policy DM13).
- 5.1.4 The site is within the BUAB, where the spatial strategy SS1 permits new development, subject to compliance with other Plan policies.
- 5.1.5 In addition, the NPPF makes it abundantly clear that LPAs must ensure there is sufficient education provision to meet the needs of its community:

“ 100: It is important that a sufficient choice of early years, school and post-16 places are available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should:

- a) give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter early years, schools and post-16 facilities through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications; and
- b) work with early years, school and post-16 promoters, delivery partners and statutory bodies to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted." (NPPF, para. 100)

- 5.1.6 The proposed change of use replicates an earlier permission for the change of use of the other half of the building, 19 Liverpool Gardens, from Class E (commercial, business and services) to Class F1 (education) – see AWDM/1088/24 – approved in January 2025.
- 5.1.7 When considering the change of use at 19 Liverpool Gardens year (AWDM/1088/24), the Council Planning Officer was of the view that [quote] "education establishments are appropriate town centre activities within accessible locations" and that the educational use would "bring back a building into use within the town centre and not have an impact on the vitality or viability of the town centre or footfall". The change of use was therefore "appropriate in accordance with policy". The permission for 19 Liverpool Gardens was subsequently granted on 29th January 2025.
- 5.1.8 There have been no changes to the policy regime since that decision was made, so the same considerations apply to the current proposal to change the use of no. 17 to education. The premises would be an extension of the now established school at no. 19, expanding the teaching facilities on the site. The site is appropriate for an educational use, and it will have a positive impact on vitality and viability by bringing more staff and students into the town centre, where they will use goods and services during the course of their school day.
- 5.1.9 DM8 encourages collaborative working between the Council and service providers such as Educate U to deliver facilities for education. The policy states that facilities in appropriate locations to meet the needs of existing communities will be supported in principle. The application site is suitably located for education provision. The site is highly accessible, within walking distance of public transport and town centre shops and services. The accompanying Transport Statement by GTA Civils details the accessibility of the site by walking, cycling, bus and rail services.

- 5.1.10 Places at Educate U are in high demand, and the school has experienced recent expansion into 19 Liverpool Gardens and 52 Chapel Road across the road. The current proposal for 17 Liverpool Gardens represents the next step in the provision of high quality learning environments for the students. By providing specialist education, Educate U directly meets the needs of the local community, as required by policy DM8 and NPPF paragraph 100. Moreover, the Council is required to give “great weight” to the need to expand school provision (NPPF, 100) when deciding applications.
- 5.1.11 The school brings footfall into the town centre, both staff and students, enhancing vitality and viability. The proposed use can operate without detriment to the amenity enjoyed by occupants of surrounding properties, and is compatible with the character of Liverpool Gardens as a mixed use area.
- 5.1.12 The proposal accords with policies DM8 and DM13 of the Local Plan, and aligns with paragraph 100 of the NPPF. The principle of the change of use is therefore acceptable.

5.2 Heritage

- 5.2.1 The site is in the Chapel Road Conservation Area. No physical alterations are required to the building to enable the change of use. The existing character, appearance and architectural features, including yellow brickwork, decorative bargeboards and sash windows, as shown in the photographs, will be preserved.
- 5.2.2 There are therefore no heritage implications to consider in terms of the appearance of the building, and the character and appearance of the CA will be preserved.
- 5.2.3 Changes in activity can affect the character of heritage assets, for example an increase in noise can affect the ability to appreciate the historic and architectural interest of an area. However in this instance, the proposed use would not result in an increased level of activity or noise compared to the existing office use.
- 5.2.4 It is concluded that the proposed change of use would respect, preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Chapel Road CA, in accordance with DM24 of the Local Plan.

5.3 Transport and Highways

- 5.3.1 The application is accompanied by a Transport Statement by GTA Civils.
- 5.3.2 The majority of the students are collected from the taxi rank at 2 Railway Approach by the school's teaching assistants each morning at 9.30am, and arrive at the Liverpool Gardens site on foot shortly after. The actual number of trips to and from the site is therefore expected to be lower than the 13 two-way AM weekday peak and 1 two-way weekday PM peak trips modelled by the TRICS database. Even this modelled number of trips can be comfortably accommodated on the local highway network (TS, para. 6.8).
- 5.3.3 With the site being accessed by frequent bus services and other sustainable modes, there would be no unacceptable highways or transport impacts as a result of the proposed development.
- 5.3.4 The car park serving the property has parking for eight vehicles, which is considered appropriate to serve the school, including 16 members of staff, given that staff typically travel outside of peak hours and work across different sites (TS, para. 5.5). On-street parking on meters is also available in the vicinity.
- 5.3.5 The development will encourage sustainable and active travel, in accordance with DM15 of the Local Plan. The proposal is acceptable from a highways perspective.

5.4 Amenity

- 5.4.1 The site is in a town centre location surrounded by commercial development. The normal school hours are 8.30am to 4.40pm, Monday to Friday. Although there are some residential dwellings to the north on Ambrose Place, these are somewhat removed from the site, and in any event the proposed school use is not considered to be incompatible with residential dwellings.
- 5.4.2 The proposed use will not have a harmful impact on residential amenity.

6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 This Planning and Heritage Statement has assessed the proposed change of use of 17 Liverpool Gardens from Class E (commercial, business and service) to Class F1(a) (education), to facilitate the continued expansion of Educate U West Sussex Ltd. The proposal will provide additional classroom and specialist teaching space to support 24 additional pupils and 16 staff, with no external alterations to the building. Internal changes are limited to reconfiguration of existing office rooms into classrooms, as shown on the submitted Proposed Floor Plans.

- Policy DM8 supports new and enhanced education and community facilities in accessible locations where they meet local needs. Educate U provides specialist SEND provision, meeting an identified local requirement for places.
- Policy DM13 supports active uses in the town centre and secondary shopping frontages. The educational use will increase footfall and contribute positively to vitality and viability.
- Policy SS1 supports development within the Built-Up Area Boundary (BUAB).
- NPPF paragraph 100 requires great weight to be given to the need to expand or alter schools.

6.2 The Council granted planning permission for the adjacent premises at 19 Liverpool Gardens for an identical change of use in January 2025. The same policy context applies, and the proposal represents a logical and coherent extension of the established school facility.

6.3 There will be no harmful effects on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, in accordance with Policy DM24.

6.4 The Transport Statement concludes there are no material highway impacts and no mitigation is required.

6.5 The proposal represents a sustainable, policy-compliant and locally beneficial change of use that:

- Delivers much-needed specialist SEND education places in Worthing.
- Strengthens an established educational cluster around Chapel Road.

17 Liverpool Gardens, Worthing, BN11 1RY
Change of Use from Class E to Class F1(a) Education



- Enhances town centre vitality.
- Preserves the character and appearance of the Chapel Road Conservation Area.
- Generates no adverse impacts on highways, transport or residential amenity.

6.6 The development fully accords with the Worthing Local Plan—particularly Policies DM8, DM13, SS1 and DM24—and with paragraph 100 of the NPPF, which requires great weight to be given to school expansion. Accordingly, the proposed change of use should be supported and approved.