Expiry Date - 31/07/2025

Development Management – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/0727/25 **Recommendation – APPROVE**

Site: **8 Southey Road Worthing West Sussex BN11 3HT**

Proposal: **Change of use of existing building to form 8no. residential apartments (use class C3(a)) to provide supported housing for older people together with external alterations and minor extensions.**

Date of site visit: 08.06.2023 (As for AWDM/1960/22) and desk-top using Google Street View imagery

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: Y – Amended Plans

Site and Surroundings

The application relates to a detached, enlarged, Victorian villa fronting the east side of Southey Road. The property occupies a good-sized plot, the front half of which is perpendicular to the road alignment but then dog-legs eastwards to the rear. The original villa has been substantially enlarged by a part single/part 2-storey flat-roofed rear extension. The extension occupies virtually the full width of the plot and its footprint replicates the unusual dog-legged plot shape. A conservatory has been added to the south side infilling a gap between the extension and the southern site boundary. The building is set back from the road behind a large, paved, frontage area enclosed at the front by a flint and brick dressed wall.

The site is not listed or within a Conservation Area. There are no TPO trees on the site.

The surrounding area is characterised by a mixture of converted and purpose-built flat buildings, with a broad range of residential uses including dwellings, sheltered housing, residential care homes and HMOs.

Background to former use

The property is currently vacant but was last operated by The Abbeyfield (Worthing) Society providing supported accommodation for older people. Although the eligibility criteria for occupation was 55yrs+ it is understood the majority of tenants were aged 80-90yrs. The supported housing model that was in operation didn't fit neatly into either use Class C2 (residential care homes) or sheltered housing (Class C3). The property was licensed as an HMO from 2018, but didn't constitute a typical HMO in that some services were provided to the residents. For example, a midday and evening meal was prepared by day staff on the premises and provided to residents in a

communal dining room. Laundry and room cleaning was undertaken by staff on a weekly basis Residents had access to a communal lounge/conservatory and access to the shared garden.

The residents' private rooms consisted of a bedsitting room with kitchenette (microwave/mini-fridge/kettle point), but no sink or oven/hob, plus an en-suite bath or shower room. At the time of the last application (in 2023) there were no staff 'living-in'.

The use/accommodation stopped operating later in 2023 due to the high level of vacancies.

Proposal

The Applicant, Abbeyfield South Downs, is a registered charity and a Registered Provider providing supported housing for older people on affordable or low-cost rental tenures.

Full planning permission is sought to convert, alter and enlarge the existing building to provide 8no self-contained residential flats for older people (Class C3(a)).

The submitted plans which have been amended propose 4no flats on the ground-floor (2 x 2-person 1-bedroom units and 2 x 1-person 1-bedroom units), and 4no flats (1 x 2-person 1-bedroom units 3 x 1-person 1-bedroom units) on the first-floor. The internal and external accommodation will be accessible with a new ramped access provided to the front entrance and provision of an internal lift.

The proposed external alterations involve the removal of the existing conservatory on the south side, blocking-up of existing window openings and insertion of new window/French door openings (North, South, West elevations), roof lights inserted into the flat roofs of the existing single-storey and 2-storey rear components, modest first-floor infill extension on the south side of the flat roofed component, and a small-scale enlargement of the building footprint at ground and first-floor comprising infilling between the existing bay windows on the rear north-east elevation.

New bin and 'buggy' stores are proposed in the space between the south side of the building and the site boundary. Solar PVs are proposed on the west and south-facing pitched roof slopes of the frontage building and the flat roof of the 2-storey rear component. 3no ASHPs are proposed in the rear garden (2no stacked) adjoining the southern site boundary.

Three car parking spaces will be provided on the existing site frontage.

Relevant Planning History:

WB/1446/73 Change of Use to a home for the elderly. Permitted. A condition of the permission requires the number of residents to be agreed in writing but there is no record of the agreement.

WB/1153/74 2-storey extension to rear of home for elderly persons. Permitted with no limitations to number of residents.

WB/00/00300 Two-storey rear extension to provide rear exit and enlarge 5no bedrooms and provide en-suite facilities. Permitted - with no limitation to number of residents.

AWDM/0664/14 Conservatory to south elevation. Approved and implemented.

AWDM/1960/22 Retrospective application to convert existing managers flat (previously rooms 5 and 6) on the first floor into a one bedroom flat to be used for resident accommodation. Proposed conversion of the previous house manager's flat on the ground floor into two separate one bedroom flats for resident accommodation. Permitted.

Consultations:

WSCC: The Local Highway Authority has raised no objection, commenting: -

"*The proposed alterations will not change how the building has been utilised in the recent past. The site has been used as a care home and for sheltered housing for the elderly for a number of years. No changes are proposed to the access onto the public highway and 3 car parking spaces have been provided on-site. An electric Buggy store has been provided and it is likely that the car parking spaces are to be used by staff and not occupiers of the apartments. Parking is available 'on-street' for permit holders only.*

No highway objection."

Southern Water

<u>Proposed soakaways</u>
The Council's Building Control officers or technical staff should be asked to comment on the adequacy of soakaways to dispose of surface water from the proposed development. No new soakaways should be located within 5 metres of a public or adoptable gravity sewer, rising main or water main.

No Soakaways should be connected to the public surface water sewer.

<u>Connection To Public Sewer</u>
Southern Water requires a formal application for a connection to the public sewer to be made by the applicant or developer.

Southern Water request that should this planning application receive planning approval, the following informative is attached to the consent: "*Construction of the development shall not commence until details of the proposed means of*

foul sewerage and surface water disposal have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with Southern Water."

Tree planting
Southern Water have restrictions on the proposed tree planting adjacent to Southern Water sewers, rising mains or water mains.

In order to protect public apparatus, Southern Water requests that if consent is granted, the following pre commencement condition is attached to the planning permission: "*The developer must advise the local authority (in consultation with Southern Water) of the landscaping proposals in proximity of public apparatus in order to protect it in accordance with Southern Water's guidance, prior to the commencement of the development."*

Officer Comment: The recommended conditions/informative are considered unduly onerous and disproportionate to the proposed development which primarily involves the re-use and adaptation of the existing building. The plan accompanying the Southern Water comments does not show any Southern Water infrastructure within the development site.

WSP: The Council's drainage consultant has no objection, commenting:

"Following a review of the submitted information, we have no objection on surface water grounds. Due to the site, size, location, and type of development we would recommend the approval of the application."

Adur and Worthing Councils

The **EHO** has no adverse comments.

Representations

A representation has been received from an occupier of Cambridge Lodge adjoining the site to the North, advising that it is occupied mainly by retired and elderly residents 75yrs+ and that other nearby properties are also occupied by elderly people and people with learning difficulties. Concern has been expressed about noise generated by future occupiers of the proposed flats, including use of the communal garden.

Officer Comment: The description of the application has been amended to make it clear that the proposal consists of supported housing for older people and this can be secured as a condition of planning permission.

Relevant Planning Policies

Worthing Local Plan policies (WBC 2023): SP1, SS1, DM1, DM2, DM5, DM15, DM16, DM17, DM18
National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG 2024)
National Planning Practice Guidance

Planning Assessment

Principle of the Development

Local Plan policy DM1 states: "*To meet the needs of older people, housing with support and housing with care should be prioritised over care bed spaces. These should be in both affordable and market tenures in accessible and suitable locations close to local services*."

People aged over 65 represent 22.8% of the local population across Adur & Worthing and numbers are expected to increase by 10,700 (43%) in Worthing in the Local Plan period 2016-36. Given the ageing population it is anticipated there is likely to be an increased requirement for specialist housing options moving forward. Factors that may influence such a move could include issues related to loneliness, health, ability to maintain an existing home and/or care and support needs. Options include sheltered and extra care housing (classed as C3 dwellings), and residential care homes and nursing homes (care bed spaces classed as C2 provision). Sheltered and extra care housing are alternatives to care/nursing home bed spaces and can help to reduce costs associated with care by supporting people to remain as independent for as long as possible as well as being well integrated into local communities. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment has identified a need for 1,601 additional market and affordable dwellings to provide housing with support or housing with care in the period to 2026.

In essence the proposal will provide a more attractive model of supported housing accommodation for older people than the previous use which became unviable due to low occupancy rates. The individual flats will be fully self-contained. There will be no live-in staff but the Agent has confirmed that staff will visit the premises at set times during each day to provide support and assistance to the residents. Staff will be available 'on-call' at all times. Domestic cleaning staff will also visit the property on a regular basis. The submitted plans show the provision of a staff WC, and there is a communal sitting room on the ground-floor directly off the entrance lobby.

The Applicant's Agent has agreed to a condition of planning permission limiting occupancy to residents aged 55yrs+.

Visual Amenity

The proposed extensions and alterations are very modest in scale and will have very limited impact on the appearance of the existing building. The most noticeable change will be the insertion of a new first-floor window opening in the front elevation of the original villa which following discussions has been amended to reflect the size, proportions and detailed design of the other windows in this older part of the building. A new pair of French doors with Juliet balcony (in place of an existing window) is proposed at first floor on the south side of the flat-roofed rear part of the building. However, this existing

first floor component is narrower in width than the original villa in front of it and thus the enlarged opening will not be visible from the street.

No details of the proposed bin and buggy stores have been provided, but it is considered this could reasonably be dealt with as a condition of planning permission.

Residential Amenity – Proposed Occupiers

Unlike the former use, the proposed flats would be fully self-contained.

The submitted plans show that each of the proposed 1-person 1-bedroom flats and 2-person 1-bedroom flats would meet the respective minimum internal space standard of 39sqm and 50sqm. It has been noted that the size of the bedroom in several of the proposed 1-person flats exceeds the minimum floor area of a single bedroom and is has been questioned whether these units should properly be considered as 2-person units (and would be sub-standard as a result). The Agent has responded that the flats have been designed as supported housing for older people, and it is likely that some residents will be less ambulant and require use of a wheelchair/walking aids or require assistance from staff to provide some elements of care. It is stated that bedrooms have been designed to enable residents to have double beds whilst also allowing adequate space for carers to manoeuvre around the bed and for a wheelchair to be used. The scheme has been designed to comply with the Building Regulation requirements for an Accessible Dwelling. It is considered this explanation can be accepted as justification for the proposed layout/room sizes. In addition to a condition limiting occupancy to 55yrs+ the Agent will accept a condition limiting occupancy of flats 1, 3, 5, 6 and 8 to a single person.

Flats 2, 3 and 7 will have a single aspect to the south. The aspect from ground-floor Flats 3 is constrained by the proximity of the windows to the boundary wall but will have some outlook onto a small, landscaped garden area to be created on the south side (facilitated by the removal of the existing conservatory). Light to the bedroom will be supplemented by the creation of a rooflight in the flat roof above.

All flats will have access to the communal garden area. Flat 4 will have direct access onto the existing raised deck at the rear (with steps down into the garden). Flat 8 will have direct access onto the existing first-floor balcony at the rear.

Overall, most of the proposed flats will be provided with good standards of amenity with a satisfactory standard of amenity provided for Flat 3.

Residential Amenity - Neighbours

The footprint of the existing building occupies a substantial proportion of the plot and is adjoined on all sides by neighbouring buildings in relatively close

proximity including Cambridge Lodge to the north, 6 Southey Road to the south, 4-6 Nursery Lane to the south and Ramsey Hall to the east.

Cambridge Lodge comprises a predominantly 3-storey (with some 2-storey and single-storey components) modern, purpose-built sheltered housing scheme with communal garden in the southeast part of the site. The proposed 2-storey rear extension (infilling between the existing rear bay windows) would be very modest in scale and have no significant impacts on the amenities of this property.

No.6 Southey Road, a double-fronted villa similar in character and appearance to the front component of the application property is in use as 6 studio flats. The proposed bin and buggy stores will be sited adjacent to the parking area on the frontage of No.6 and a bin store sited in the adjacent external area to the side of No.6. Existing planting on this boundary and in due course the proposed new boundary planting (in place of the existing conservatory) will continue to provide an element of screening between ground-floor windows in the respective properties.

Nos 6 & 8 Nursery Lane, a complex of linked attached, single-storey buildings in use as a care home for disabled people. The common boundary consists of a brick wall with fencing on top approximately 1.8m tall. The proposed ASHPs are shown sited adjacent to the common boundary and have the potential to give rise to noise disturbance. However, precise details of their siting, noise emissions and any necessary mitigation measures can be dealt with as a condition of planning permission.

Ramsey Hall, a series of linked 3-storey buildings fronting Byron Road, comprises a sheltered housing scheme and will not be significantly impacted by the proposals.

Highway Safety

There is a large forecourt with currently with space for 4 vehicles. One space will be lost owing to the siting of the proposed bin and buggy stores. The WSCC Parking Demand Calculator identifies the development as generating a parking demand of 5 spaces. However, given the nature of the use the demand is likely to be substantially less. As noted by the Highway Officer the on-site parking provision is more likely to be used by daily visiting staff.

The site is sustainably located within walking distance of the shops and facilities of Rowlands Road Neighbourhood shopping centre and therefore fulfils the accessibility criteria of policy DM1(d).

The LHA has raised no objection on parking or highway safety grounds.

CIL

The development which will provide a form of social housing by a charitable institution is exempt from CIL.

Sustainable Development

Worthing Local Plan policy DM16 encourages all development to achieve a minimum 20% CO2 reduction compared to the Building Regulations Part L (2013) standard through energy efficiency measures.

Policy DM17 requires all development resulting in new housing (including changes of use) to incorporate renewable and/or low carbon energy production equipment to meet at least 10% of predicted total energy requirements.

The re-use and adaption of the existing building is inherently sustainable but imposes some limitations on the type and extent of energy efficiency measures that can be installed. The supporting statement indicates that the existing walls and roof with be thermally upgraded and new areas of construction well insulated. Solar PVs are to be provided along with new, efficient hot water/heating systems. These measures will reduce the CO2 emissions of the existing building and as a minimum comply with the stipulated requirements within Part L.

A condition can be imposed to ensure the development secures the minimum EPC rating.

BNG

The proposed change to the footprint of the building is very modest and proposed bin and bike stores will not result in the loss of any undeveloped or garden land. An area of hard standing in the rear garden will be enlarged to create a seating area. The development meets the ‘de minimis’ exemption for BNG.

The removal of the existing conservatory will provide an opportunity to introduce additional soft landscaping along the edge of the southern boundary adjoining No.6 Southey Road.

2no bat and 2no bird boxes will be provided in the rear garden.

Recommendation

APPROVE subject to Conditions:-

1. Drawing Numbers
2. Time Limit
3. New work and work of making good in matching materials
4. New first-floor window (and external window surround) to be inserted into west elevation of the bedroom to Flat 5 shall match in all respects the proportions and detailed design of the existing window in the same room on the south elevation.
5. Occupation limited to 55yrs or over
6. Occupation of flats 1, 3, 5, 6 and 8 limited to a single person.

7. Pre commencement precise details of scheme to demonstrate 10% energy demand met by renewable or low carbon provision
8. Notwithstanding the details shown on the approved plan prior to installation details of the siting, make and model of the proposed ASHPs shown on the approved plan, including an assessment of noise emissions and any necessary mitigation measures, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter only the ASHPs and associated details as agreed shall be implemented.
9. Agree details of bins store and buggy store
10. Agree hard and soft landscaping scheme
11. Provide bats and birds boxes
12. Hours of construction
13. CMP

Informative

Pro-Active Amendment
Southern Water
Addressing

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

Case Officer:	Jo Morin	Date: 07.08.2025
Authorised by:	Peter Barnett	Date: 7 August 2025