

Case Officer's Report (Delegated Decision)

Regulation 3

Description of the Proposal: Proposed change of use from Fire Brigade Training Centre (Class F1(a)) to Children's Emergency Accommodation (Use Class C2 - Residential Institution) with associated parking.

Site Address: 57 Ardsheal Road, Gaisford, Worthing, West Sussex, BN14 7RN

Application No: WSCC/041/23

Local Member: Dawn Smith

Local Council: Adur Worthing District Councils

Site Location and Description

Number 57 Ardsheal Road is a two-storey detached building located on the southern side of Ardsheal Road, immediately to the east of the eastern access into Worthing Fire Station. The application is located within a predominantly residential area of Gaisford, Worthing, inside the built-up area boundary of Worthing (as defined within the Worthing Local Plan, 2023). Broadwater Green is located directly to the north of the application site, beyond Ardsheal Road, and properties on Rectory Gardens are located immediately beyond the eastern boundary of the application site.

The building to which this application relates is characterised by a red brick finish around, a dual pitched roof and white uPVC fenestration. The property has most recently been used as a training facility by the adjacent Fire Station, which is operated by West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service. The building is set back 8m from Ardsheal Road by a grassed front garden area, which is enclosed within a dwarf stone wall. The property is separated from the adjacent residential buildings on Rectory Gardens to the east by a two-metre high stone wall, which extends southward along the eastern boundary to enclose the rear garden area. A 2m high brick wall along the western site boundary separates the rear garden area from the Fire Station, and a flat-roof single storey extension projects southward from the rear elevation of the property.

The site is not located within a designated landscape of historic interest and is not within a location identified as being at an increased risk of flooding.

Relevant Planning History

WB/948/07: False pitched roof over existing building to provide training facility (approved 18/09/2007).

Proposed Development

Planning Permission is sought for the change of use of the building from a training centre (F1.a) to Children's Emergency Accommodation (Class C2). The facility would

accommodate a maximum of two children in care and six adult carers who would be present at the site on a shift-basis.

The proposal would not require any external or internal alterations to the building. The creation of two additional parking spaces at the rear of the property would necessitate the removal of a 6m portion of the brick wall that separates the rear garden of the property from the Fire Station, and the parking spaces would be enclosed by a 1.8m high close board fence.

Environmental Impact Assessment

The proposed development does not fall within Schedule 1 or 2 of the EIA Regulations, so that neither screening nor EIA are required.

Relevant Planning and Other Policies

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications are determined in accordance with the statutory development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise (as confirmed in paragraph 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework ('the NPPF')).

The key policies in the development plan that are material to the determination of the application, are summarised below. In addition, reference is made to relevant national planning policy and other policies that guide the decision-making process and which are material to the determination of the application.

Worthing Local Plan (2023):

- SP1 - Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development;
- SS1 - Spatial Strategy;
- DM5 - Quality of the Built Environment; and,
- DM8 - Planning for Sustainable Communities/Community Facilities.

National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023):

- 11 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development;
- 38 - Positive Decision Making;
- 55 - Use of Planning Conditions;
- 96 - Healthy, Inclusive and Safe Places;
- 97 - Provide Social, Recreational and Cultural Facilities;
- 135 - Design Quality;
- 136 - Trees and the Quality of the Urban Environment; and,
- 137 - Design.

Consultations

County Councillor (Dawn Smith): No objection.

Adur and Worthing Councils: No response received.

WSSC Highways: No objection, subject to the inclusion of a condition to secure parking arrangement.

Representations

None received.

Consideration of Key Issues

The main material considerations in relation to this application are:

- need for the development; and,
- impacts on residential amenity.

Need for the Development

The proposal is for the change of use of the Fire Brigade Training Centre (Class F1.a) to Children's Emergency Accommodation (Use Class C2) to provide residential care and would include the delivery of two tandem parking spaces within the existing grassed area to the rear (south) of the building. The property is located within the built-up area boundary of Worthing, where new development is acceptable in principle, subject to being in accordance with Development Plan Policies.

The proposed development would result in the loss of the existing training facility. There is need, therefore, to assess the requirement for the additional community facility against the loss of the training facility.

Policy SS1 (Spatial Strategy) of the Worthing Local Plan (2023) (WLP), seeks to (a) *"deliver high quality development and provide for the needs of local communities..."* and (d) i) *"development will be permitted subject to compliance with other policies in the Local Plan, and development should make efficient use of previously developed land... appropriate for its proposed use and also relate well to the surrounding uses and the character of the area"*.

Further, policy DM8 of the WLP states that *"the Council will support 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."*

The existing use of the building as a training facility is understood to be surplus to the current training need of the WSSC Fire and Rescue Service, following completion of the new Horsham Fire Training Centre. The proposed repurposing of the building for the emergency support for children would meet the requirements of the local community by way of providing additional health and social facilities to vulnerable young people.

Therefore, it is considered that the community need for the facility outweighs its retention as a training facility, which is no longer required. The proposal is considered to comply with Policies SS1 and DM8 of the WLP and is afforded significant weight in the planning balance accordingly.

Impacts on Residential Amenity

As per the requirements of Policy DM5 of the WLP, development should make a positive contribution to the sense of place, local character and distinctiveness of an area, be well built and accessible with regard to its layout when considering potential users of the site, not have an unacceptable impact upon the amenities of adjacent properties and respect the existing natural features of the site, among other requirements.

The proposed change of use would not require any external alterations to the existing building, however, would necessitate the removal a six-metre segment of the western wall that separates the rear garden of the property from the yard area of the adjacent Fire Station to provide parking spaces for users of the facility. The proposal would not require the removal of any of the trees on the site. The two-storey properties located to the east of the application site along Rectory Gardens may experience additional exposure to the Fire Station as a result of the removal of the wall section and so consideration of the impact on their amenity is required.

The properties on Rectory Gardens (Numbers 71 -85) are located 30m to the east of the existing Fire Station yard area and are currently separated from the site by the south-eastern appliance bay, two storey training facility (as per the subject of this application) and the enclosed grassed area that currently exists between them. These properties currently overlook the adjacent grassed area and yard from their first-floor windows, although there are not any significant views into the site at ground level as a result of there being a 2m boundary wall that separates the application site from these properties. Removal of the 6m segment of wall would not significantly increase the visual impact of the yard area upon the amenity of these residents as they already overlook the adjacent Fire Station from their first and second floor windows.

The applicant has provided a Children's Home Management Plan which details how the site will be operated safely and respectfully when considering adjoining land uses and the individual needs of the children in care. While the change of use of the facility to a children's care home may result in an increase in activity at the site, it is not anticipated that the proposed use of the building would result in any significant impacts on the amenity of neighbouring residences by way of additional overlooking or noise. The parking area would be enclosed centrally within the site by an additional 1.8m high fence that would likely appear unobtrusive in scale when considered within the context the surrounding buildings. As a result, it is considered that there would be no built aspects of the proposal that would appear visually intrusive when considered within the context of the site or surrounding area.

Therefore, it is anticipated that the proposed development would not result in any significant additional impact upon the amenity of nearby residential receptors. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Policy DM5 of the WLP with regard to its impact upon the amenity of local residences and is afforded neutral weight in the planning balance accordingly.

Other Considerations

Other considerations in relation to this application are:

Highways Capacity and Road Safety:

The proposed change of use would result in the intensification of vehicular activity at the site as a result of the additional staff parking required in conjunction with its operation. WSSC Highways have been consulted on the application, and raise no objection to the proposed development, subject to the proposed parking arrangement being delivered in accordance with the submitted site layout Block Plan and have requested that a condition be included to secure this. As per their recommendation, the Block Plan shall be included within the list of approved plans to ensure that the development is brought forward as required by the consultee.

Overall Conclusion

Overall, it is considered that the proposed development accords with the statutory development plan when read as a whole. Furthermore, there are no material considerations in this case that indicate a decision other than in line with the statutory development plan, that is, the granting of planning permission.

In favour of the proposal, the need for the development carries great weight, and the Impact on residential Amenity carries neutral weight. Therefore, on balance, it is considered that the benefits of the proposal outweigh any disbenefits and, as such, the proposed development constitutes sustainable development (as defined in paragraphs 7 and 8 of the NPPF).

Recommendation (Delegated Decision)

For the reasons given above, it is recommended that planning permission is granted under delegated powers subject to the conditions set out in Appendix 1.



Factors taken into account

Crime and Disorder Act 1998: No implications arise from this development.

Human Rights Act 1998: Article 8 of the European Convention safeguards the respect for family life and home whilst Article 1 of the first protocol concerns the non-interference with the peaceful enjoyment of private property. Both rights are subject to conditions and interference with these rights may be permitted if the need to do so is proportionate. In this particular matter, the interests of those affected by the planned development have been fully considered as have the relevant considerations which may justify interference with particular rights. All of these are set out within the body of the report and are examined in the context of relevant planning considerations.

Equality Act 2010: The County Council has a duty to have regard to the impact of any proposal on those people with characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010. Officers considered the information provided by the applicant, together with the responses from consultees (and any representations made by third parties) and determined that the proposal would not give rise to unacceptable material impact on

individuals or identifiable groups with protected characteristics. Accordingly, no changes to the proposal were required to make it acceptable in this regard.

Date of Report: 16/01/2023	Case Officer's Name: Edward Anderson
	Case Officer's Signature: 
Date of Review: 16/01/2024	Reviewer's Name: Andrew Sierakowski
	Reviewer's Signature: 

Appendix 1: Conditions and Informative(s)

Conditions

Commencement

1. The development to which this permission relates shall be begun not later than the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission. Written notification of the date of commencement shall be sent to the County Planning Authority within 7 days of such commencement.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Approved Plans

2. The development shall not take place other than in accordance with the approved plans:
 - Site Layout – Proposed Block Plan: Drawing No. 2 of 7, Version 3, received 16/01/2024;
 - Internal Site Layout – Existing: Drawing No. 3 of 7, dated 04/08/2023;
 - Internal Site Layout – Proposed: Drawing No. 4 of 7, dated 04/08/2023;
 - Location Plan: Drawing No. 1 of 7, dated 29/08/2023;
 - Elevations – Existing: Drawing No. 6 of 7, dated 04/08/2023;
 - Elevations – Proposed: Drawing No. 7 of 7, dated 04/08/2023;
 - Roof Plan – Proposed: Drawing No. 5 of 7, dated 04/08/2023;
 - Agent Supporting Statement – Retained Trees and Fence Design: Received 08/01/2023.

along with information submitted with the application submitted with the application including the Design & Access Statement (dated October 2023), save as varied by the conditions hereafter.

Reason: to secure a satisfactory development.

Approved Use

3. The use of the building hereby permitted shall be for the purposes detailed in the application, namely for the delivery of support and care for young people (Use Class C2 – Residential Institution).

Reason: To ensure the site is used appropriately as per the requirements of the school's educational responsibility.

Protection of Trees

4. All excavation works within the Root Protection Area of any trees around the site, as identified on the approved Block Plan (Version 3, received 16/01/2024), must be conducted in accordance with BS5837:2012 (trees in relation to design, demolition and construction).

Reason: To protect existing trees and shrubs in the interests of the visual amenity and landscape of the locality.

Informative

- A. The County Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining the planning application by identifying issues of concern and considering whether planning conditions could be used to satisfactorily address them. As a result, the County Planning Authority has been able to grant planning permission, in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.