

Planning Differences for Meeting 6th January 2026

23/01788/FUL Site At 34-46 and 11-23 Baron Road and Heralds Way respectively

Change of use of first and second floors from vacant education space (class F1) to create 34 new apartments (class C3) and external alterations.

SWFTC Minute: PE387

“It was agreed that the Planning and Environment Committee had concerns and would like to make the following comment:

The application is for a change of use from education to housing by converting the classrooms to 34 apartments. There has been a previous similar application. This was rejected for various reasons including lack of parking, reduction in retail space, no open space / poor facilities for residents., use of the central court for parking would reduce access to the retail units, insufficient affordable housing.

The application does not include any parking. The applicant justifies this by arguing that: town centre site with lots of amenities within walking distance, nearby bus stops and bus routes, nearby railway station, likely residents would not use many cars, nearby car parks ' Barons Road, Tylers Ride, Knight Street, unrestricted street parking nearby ' e.g. Roding Leigh, provision of cycle racks. South Woodham Town Council still believe that Car Parking is an issue. Two of the car parks are up for sale and any new owner might want to use them for some other use. The application measured available capacity at 00:45 and 05:00 hours because any residents would mainly want to use parking overnight. Unsurprisingly there were plenty of empty spaces at those times. However, presumably the residents would also want parking in the evenings and weekend daytimes when usage is very high and there are few if any empty spaces currently. In addition there is a 4-hour time restriction on use of the Barons Road car Park. There have been complaints from residents of Roding Leigh regarding all day parking by non-residents, possible rail users or town centre workers.

The Council is disappointed that the application includes no affordable housing.

The first and second floors of this building have been unused since 2019, The Council believes it is desirable to bring these floors back into use. It has not been well maintained in that time. A conversion into apartments would mean it would provide housing, add to the life and use of the town centre. It is using a brownfield site to provide housing.”

Chelmsford City Council: Permitted

See attached Officer Report and Decision Notice from Chelmsford City Council.