expiry 5.11.07

Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: ADC/0562/07 Recommendation - Permit

Site: **St Peters Church Gardner Road Southwick West Sussex**

Proposal: **Refurbishment and remodelling of church to form healthy living, family and childrens centre with parking, plus erection of bin and cycle stores (WSCC Reg 3)**

The Application

The application will be determined by West Sussex County Council and is referred to this Council for observations only.

The application relates to St. Peter's Church located on the south side of Gardner Road. The church is a Twentieth Century built brick church in a large plot in a mainly residential area. To the south-west, north-west, and north-east are residential houses of similar age grouped in terraces and semi-detached groups. Directly to the north is an industrial site (NTL Communications) and to the south is Fishersgate Recreation Ground. On the west side of the Recreation Ground is the Community Centre and a Hockey pitch which appears to be derelict.

The applicant is the Director for Children & Young People Services at WSCC and they seek to convert the existing church into a Healthy Living, Family and Children's Centre, in line with a Government initiative to reduce the gap between deprived communities and those more fortunate.

The centre itself is proposed to be a one-stop shop to provide services for families with young children with the aim to provide:

- Early education integrated with childcare;
- Family support and outreach to parents;
- Child and family health services.

Consultations and Representations

Third Parties: There have been three letters of representation regarding the application. The owner of No.66 Gardner Road to the north has raised concerns about parking and noise.

The owner of No.68 has written in to object to the proposals and raises concerns that:

- That the proposed bin store will be by established trees spoiling what green there is on the site.
- One of the buggy parks will be in full view of Gardner road.

- The increase in road traffic could cause more risk to young children on their route to school.
- Any increase in street lighting would cause light pollution to homeowners.
- If the centre was to operate outside of normal hours there could be extra noise from cars.

The owner of 107A, the old vicarage to the east has stated that the application is a challenging and positive proposal and they wish to **add their support** to the plans. They have commented that the previous owner of the vicarage used to suffer regular problems with disturbance owing to the proximity of the site to the property.

Environmental Health Officer: No objections.

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adopted West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-16 (WSCC 2005): LOC1, NE11, DEV1, DEV4-5.
Adopted Adur District Local Plan 1993-2006 (ADC 1996): AG1, AG2, ACS5
Revised West Sussex Parking Standards (WSCC 2003 & ADC2004)
PPS1 ' Delivering Sustainable Development' (ODPM 2005)

Planning Assessment

The main concerns are the effect that the conversion of the church will have on the residential amenity of the surrounding dwellings, and the effect that the proposed alterations and additions will have on the character of the building and the surrounding area.

Policies
Structure Plan policies allow for the provision of new or improved community facilities and services where they meet the identified needs of local communities (NE11), they should protect, and where possible, enhance the character and distinctiveness of an area, requiring high standards of design, layout and construction (DEV1). Policy AG2 of the Local Plan seeks to encourage access for people with disabilities, the elderly and those with pushchairs and to ensure that provision is made for the needs of these people in all developments. ACS5 states that the LPA will permit proposals to develop, extend or improve community facilities.

Visual amenity
The proposed external alterations to the building would take the form of replacement entrance doors and new fire exit doors which are considered to be relatively minor in scale and would not have an effect on the appearance of the church.

The proposed bin store would have a similar appearance to that of a garden shed 3.3m wide, by 1.8m deep, by 1.8m in height. To place it in the proposed location toward the far NW corner of the site would require the removal of a tree, one of a line, which runs up the western side of the site. The trees, although not great specimens, are seen as an attractive feature that would be diminished by the siting of the bin store so close to Gardiner Road, and it is felt that it should be re sited either to the south of the proposed car park or on the south side of the church where it would be obscured from view.

Equally it is likely that the two 'buggy parks' will be built in a similar manner to the bin store (if the buggys are to be left in a secure nature) and the one proposed to be attached to the north of the church would therefore be particularly obtrusive in siting and scale and should be relocated. One of the interior rooms of the church could adequately accommodate multiple folded buggies in a more secure and safe manner, and it is considered unrealistic to think that people with buggies will have personal locks or want to use a facility on the outside of the building which is out of sight and open to the elements.

Residential amenity

There are no details of additional on site lighting, but if the proposed car park or footpaths were to be lit they would not be of a level that would have an effect on the surrounding properties. If lighting were to be included it could be requested that it be turned out once the centre was closed.

The use of the church is currently unrestricted in terms of its hours of operation, as one of the objectors states there are already issues with comings and goings. The use of the centre would be more intensive during the day, but it does not appear that the centre is to be used for youth clubs or hiring out to private individuals. To suggest an hours of operation condition seems unreasonable given the proposed use, which may be beneficial at other times of the day.

Access and parking

The proposed alterations to the site include a new vehicular access onto Gardner Road on the east of the site. This would allow on-site parking for 5 cars, one being a disabled space. This would help to reduce levels of on-street parking and provided visibility is adequate will not adversely effect highway safety.

A covered and secure cycle store is to be provided which will encourage use of the centre by people who may ordinarily have come in the car.

Recommendation

That West Sussex County Council be informed that this Council has no objection to this proposal subject to: -

- Adequate consideration of the impact of the parking area on the amenities of the adjacent dwellings and on highway safety.
- Attention being given to the occupiers of the adjacent properties when considering any additional lighting on site especially in the parking area, with a condition imposed requiring details of lighting to be submitted and approved prior to commencement of installation.
- The bin storage unit be moved to a location which will prevent it from having such an obtrusive effect on the site.
- A condition be imposed requiring details of the buggy parks be submitted and approved prior to the commencement of installation, and adequate consideration be taken as to their need and location.

Case Officer: [redacted]
Date: 12/10/07

Planning Services Manager [redacted]
Date: 22-10-07

Planning and Regulatory Committee Chairman: [redacted] 25/10/07
Date: