Expiry Date - 24/12/2024

Development Management – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/1308/24 Recommendation – APPROVE

Site: Charles Court Victoria Road Worthing West Sussex

Proposal: Installation of a mobility scooter store

Date of site visit: 12/11/2024

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: N

Site and Surroundings

This application relates to a block of flats on Victoria Road. Charles Court comprises flats 1-44 in one building and 45-52 in another. The plot is large but mostly covered however surrounding the buildings are communal gardens. Through the centre of the site there is an access road with other access paths throughout the site. The neighbours to the north and south are also blocks of flats. To the west on Clifton Road are residential apart from No.38 which is the church.

The site is not located within a conservation area and the building is not listed. There are no protected trees on site.

Proposal

Permission is sought to introduce a mobility scooter store within the western part of the application site. The proposed development will have a footprint of 7.2m by 1.9m with a height of 2m. The east elevation will host six doors providing access to store mobility scooters. The other elevations having no openings. The building will be clad in steel panel cladding finished in green.

The store will be used to charge electric mobility scooters.

Relevant Planning History:
10/0463/FULL – Installation of a bank of four solar panels to the main roof of Charles Court. Application Permitted 11/08/2010.

10/0463/FULL – Installation of white replacement PVCu windows to all flats (both blocks - flats Nos. 1-52 all) and renewal of existing mastic asphalt on flat roof with bituminous felt creating an increase in height of 40mm on block containing flats 1 - 44. Application Permitted 13/02/2008.

Consultations:
None

Expiry Date - 24/12/2024

Representations:
One comment was received from the church to the west:

As Trustees of the Worthing Christadelphian Hall, 38 Clifton Road, backing on to Charles Court, we OBJECT to the above application for the construction of a 6 bay electric mobility scooter store behind Charles Court in Victoria Road. 5 Reasons as follows

1.There are errors in the Application Form as submitted. Page 4 - Has the work already started? Marked as No. In fact, the concrete hardstanding was laid in April specifically for the construction of the Mobility Scooter Store. It was laid in the wrong place, directly behind and abutting our church hall. Page 6 - Are there trees on the proposed development site? This has been marked as No. However, there is a tree present marked on both plans, which will affect the position of the construction. We were assured that a full tree survey would be done and submitted with the application, but see no evidence of this.

2.There are errors in the 'Floor Plan - Existing' as submitted This shows that there are shrubs on the proposed development area. These have already been removed, and the concrete laid as mentioned above

3. There is a significant discrepancy between the different plans submitted. Which are you expected to consider? 'Site Plan, Scale 1:500' shows the mobility scooter store positioned North of our church hall, directly behind 40 Clifton Road. 'Floor Plan - Proposed' shows the location of the mobility scooter store overlapping our hall, by approximately 4m.

4. Fire Safety Concerns The 'Floor Plan - Proposed' indicates a gap of 1.36m to the wall of our church hall, at its nearest point. This is our chief concern –

Research from the National Fire Chiefs Council (2018) 'Mobility Scooter Guidance for Residential Buildings' states,

(14.1) External storage solutions should be fully risk assessed, giving consideration to arson, location, construction, fire spread, access/egress, maintenance and monitoring.

(14.2) Security and risk of arson would need to be considered as would the location normally a minimum of 6m away from a (residential) building which should not present a risk of fire spread into the building in the event of fire.
(15.6 Where there is reference to fire resisting construction and fire resisting doors, the period of fire resistance should normally be 60 minutes.)

Are you confident that these guidelines have been or will be met in this development? How will you check? Why is there a bigger gap between the mobility scooter store and the tree, than between the store and our building, where human lives could be at risk? How will the Charles Court management alert our church members if a fire does occur in the mobility scooter store? Especially if a church service or a meeting is in progress? Or a lone worker such as a cleaner present? The hall is used at varying times through the week.

Where is the evidence that this has been included in the Fire Risk Assessment?

5. Drainage Concerns What provision is made for disposal of surface water? The elevations do not appear to show guttering, yet the application form indicates the construction will be connected to the main sewer. How and where? We wish to eliminate any possibility of damp affecting the (Eastern) external wall of our hall.

Conclusion

The Design & Access Statement claims that this proposal satisfies the requirements of fire risk assessment for Charles Court. However, there is no indication that fire risk considerations have been made for neighbouring properties or for our church building. The applicant has not been clear about the location of the store having submitted two conflicting plans, or honest about the process.

Therefore, we urge you to REFUSE planning permission as presented. But see below –

Possible Solution? If however the applicant intends to proceed with the application as laid out in 'Site Plan, Scale 1:500', our response would be different.

This shows the store moved away from our hall. If the position of the tree is an issue, we would suggest that the number of electric scooter storage units be reduced from 6 to 4 which we were told, is all that is currently required. As long as the questions listed above regarding fire safety and drainage are addressed, we would drop our opposition.

Officer's response: The applicant was asked to address the comments above and provided revised drawings and a DAS clarifying the location of the store. Following revised proposals the following was received from the church trustees:

The revised proposals have addressed all the concerns that we had about the location of the Buggy Store.

However, the plans available on the website do not appear to indicate measurements of the gap between our hall and the nearest point of the store. Please confirm this is 1.36 m as previously submitted, or greater.

Also, we would like assurance in writing that should an incident occur with the store resulting in a fire or similar that we will be alerted to the event, particularly if the hall is occupied.

Response to Representations:
Following the revision of the plans the separation from the boundary would be approximately 1.9metres

Due to the scale of the proposal the potential impact to flood risk is minimal. As such it does not meet the threshold for a comment from the drainage engineers. With the minor scale it is not anticipated that it will increase the flood risk to a level that would be demonstrable to an application.

The trees on the site are also not considered to be impacted by the proposed location or scale of the development with the store being minor in nature and set away from the boundary ensuring the trees are retained and not lost to facilitate the new store.

Relevant Planning Policies
Worthing Local Plan policies (WBC 2023): SP1, DM5, DM18, DM20
National Planning Policy Framework (2023)
National Planning Practice Guidance

Planning Assessment

Principle of development
There is no objection in principle to the erection of structures to provide facilities for residential properties. It is noted that the proposal will provide a needed store subject to assessment of other material considerations such as impact on visual amenity and residential amenity.

Visual Amenity

The store is located to the rear of the site with no views available from within the public realm. The location of the store means that there will be limited views available from within the public realm. The scale of the footprint wouldn't dominate the amenity space due to height or footprint. The new materials will not result in an impact that is detrimental to the area. The steel cladding is considered harmonious to the residential area.

Residential Amenity

The properties to the west on Clifton Road will be impacted the most due to the store being located closest to this boundary.

The maximum height is just over 2m with the roof dropping towards the boundary. The design reduces the potential for overbearing impacts on the neighbouring properties. This paired with the separation distance allows there to not be an oppressive feeling created by the proposal. Due to the nature of the proposal overlooking is not an issue.

The flats within the site would not be impacted by the proposal through the location. As such it is considered that the proposed development would be acceptable.

Concerns have been raised about fire safety. Fire safety will be addressed under building regulations. Within the DAS it is explained that the store has been positioned to gain a greater level of separation from the boundary with the

church. The design incorporates fire-resistant construction with a 30-minute fire resistant liner in line with best practices.

Recommendation

APPROVE subject to Conditions:-

1. Drawing Numbers
2. Standard Time Limit
3. Materials as specified

Informative

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

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

Case Officer:	Finlay Gardner	Date: 13/08/2025
Authorised by:	Louise Prew	Date: 22/08/2025