Application Numbers: AWDM/0149/14 & AWDM/0164/14

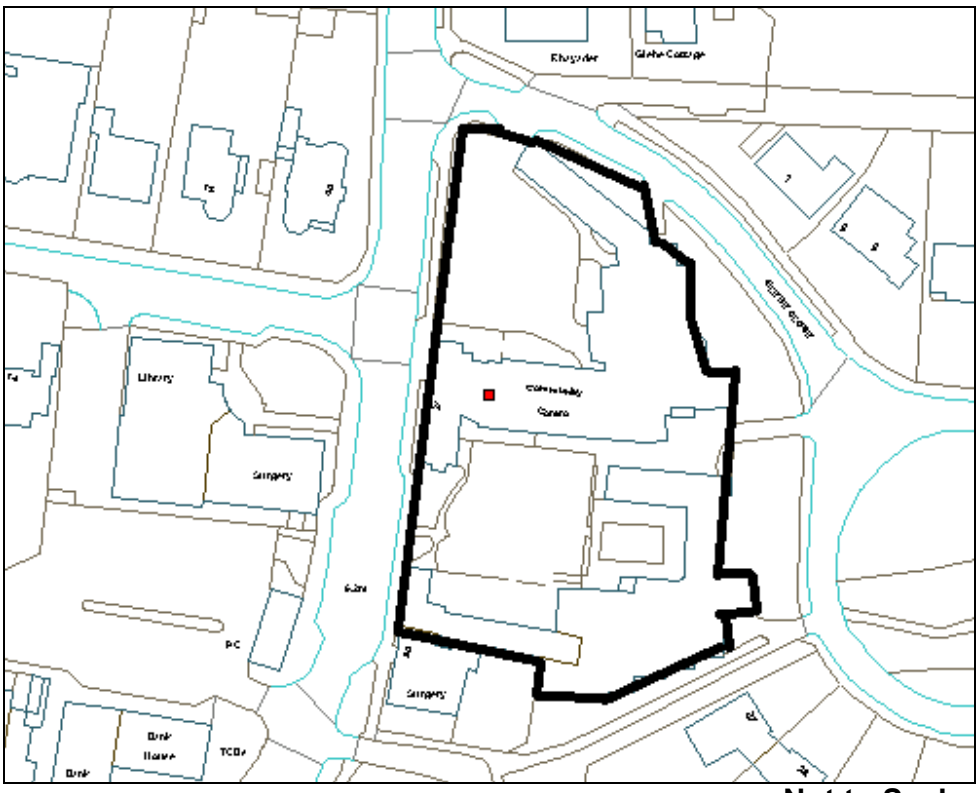
Recommendation – APPROVE Subject to receipt of satisfactory amended plans retaining the tree to the front of the building

Site: **Southwick Community Centre**

Proposal: **A new canopy and wall at main entrance (AWDM/0149/14)**

Listed Building Consent application for new canopy and wall at main entrance and various internal alterations (ADWM/0164/14)

Applicant: Mr Tony Brownings Ward: Eastbrook
Case Officer: Matthew Porter



Not to Scale

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Proposal, Site and Surroundings

For ease of reference this report deals with both planning and Listed Building consent applications.

The application property is Southwick Community Centre, located on the east side of Southwick Street. The large building, formerly the Homestead of the Manor Farm, dates from the 16th Century and is Listed Grade II. The building has been extended and altered in various ways during the course of its recent history (including applications approved in 2006). It falls within the Manor House character area of the Southwick Conservation Area.

The proposal is for a new exterior curved canopy structure to the building's front entrance, along with internal alterations to upgrade the entrance hall and office. The removal of a tree is also intended, subject of a separate tree consent application.

The new canopy structure will measure (at max) 3.1 metres in height, 3.1 metres in length, and 4.4 metres in width. The internal alterations include removal of partition walls, installation of thermal insulation of ceiling, and insertion of two roof lights (a full schedule of works is set out on the application submission)

The surrounding area is on the edge of Southwick shopping parade to the west, with residential uses in all other directions. A modern library/health centre exists on the opposite side of the road outside of the Conservation Area.

Relevant Planning History

ADC/0294/06
Alterations to kitchen entrance/exit (application for Listed Building Consent)
Granted Consent 25.10.2006

ADC/0293/06
Alterations to rear entrance/exit
Approved 25-10-2006

Consultations
None

Representations
None

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance
Adur Local Plan (saved policies): AG1, AH7, AB3-11
National Planning Policy Framework
Companion Practice Guide to PPS5: Protecting the Historical Environment

Relevant Legislation
The Committee should consider the planning application in accordance with:

Section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) that provides the application may be granted either unconditionally or subject to relevant conditions, or

refused. Regard shall be given to relevant development plan policies, any relevant local finance considerations, and other material considerations; and

Section 38(6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 that requires the decision to be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Section 16 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) that provides the application may be granted either unconditionally or subject to relevant conditions, or refused. Special regard shall be given to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Section 72 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) and pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

Planning Assessment

Principle

Both the National Planning Policy Framework and relevant Saved Adur Local Plan policies support, in principle, the upgrading of community infrastructure, including those buildings in community use.

Visual amenity and Heritage Assets

The historic architectural form of the Listed Building is simple and straightforward, with hipped or gable roof and flint and red brick walls. This combination of materials has been used on the modern parts of the community centre and the library building on the opposite corner to visually tie them into the area.

The contemporary design and aesthetics of the new canopy structure is a deliberate departure from this approach. It would ensure the structure would be readily noticeable from public vantage points within the Conservation Area, especially as it would be viewed visually against the backdrop of Listed Building behind it.

However it is designed this way for a very obvious reason – to announce to users where the front entrance is, and its design is successful in doing this. Its design approach means the structure would be readily identified as a later element, with the architectural form of the Listed Building remaining intact. Although the materials used in it would be different to those on the Listed Building and other historic buildings in the surrounding Conservation Area, they are still sympathetic in tone and texture to those of the Listed Building and its setting.

Moreover the entrance and foyer of the Centre is itself not original, having been built in 1966. Accordingly, its interior has no historic attributes, and the proposed changes to it would not be deleterious to the special qualities and architectural character of the Listing. This includes the proposed roof lights, which would be hidden behind a parapet. The plan form of the building would not be unduly disrupted by this proposal

The special qualities of the Conservation Area identified in the Council's adopted SPG appraisal of it are therefore preserved, and no visual harm more generally would arise from this proposal.

Given this circumstance, the statutory tests for new development in a Conservation Area and to a Listed Building have not been satisfied, and the proposal is not in compliance with the advice laid out in the companion Practice Guide to the defunct PPS5.

Loss of the tree and accessibility

The felling of a well-established tree is suggested by the applicant. This tree is positioned close the front entrance and the new canopy structure.

Although not deliberately planted, over time this healthy specimen has grown in stature and is now visible from several public viewpoints. The Council's Tree Officer is of the opinion that it has good public amenity value, and is resisted to its loss.

The agent argues that as the building is for the community, it is important access is available for all and the presence of the tree roots does not allow for this as its roots are causing uneven paving. It is also suggested to run new drainage close to where the tree is.

Notwithstanding the above, and following consultation with the Arboricultural Officer, your officers are of the view that proposed works can be incorporated without resulting in the loss of the tree. Given its location within the Conservation Area, the tree cannot be felled without prior notice to the Council, and in any case is considered worthy of a Tree Preservation Order. Officers are therefore continuing to negotiate on the matter of this tree with the aim of securing an agreed solution. Members will be updated at the Committee meeting on progress made on this.

Amended plans would need to be secured to delete any reference to the felling of the tree.

Residential amenity

The proposal is sufficiently removed from residential properties, so as to avoid harm onto their living conditions.

Recommendation

In relation to AWDM/0149/14 Planning Permission

Subject to the receipt of satisfactory amended plans and details confirming that the tree in front of the proposed entrance can be retained, **APPROVE** for the reason:-

The proposal would not be harmful to the special character of the Listed Building, preserves the appearance and character of the Conservation Area and would not result in the loss of a tree considered worthy of preservation. It also causes no harm to any neighbour. As such it conforms with The National Planning Policy Framework, statutory legislative tests relating to Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings, and the companion Practice Guide to the PPS5: Protecting the Historical Environment and Adur saved Local Plan Polices AG1, AH7, AB3-11.

Subject to Conditions:-

1. Standard time limit
2. Approved Plans

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.

In relation to AWDM/0164/14 Listed Building Consent:-

The proposal would preserve the character of the listed building, its setting and any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses and would accord with 'saved' policies of the Adur Local Plan and AB3-11 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Subject to Conditions:-

1. Listed Building Consent time limit
2. Approved Plans
3. Protection measures to avoid damage
4. Make good any damage