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

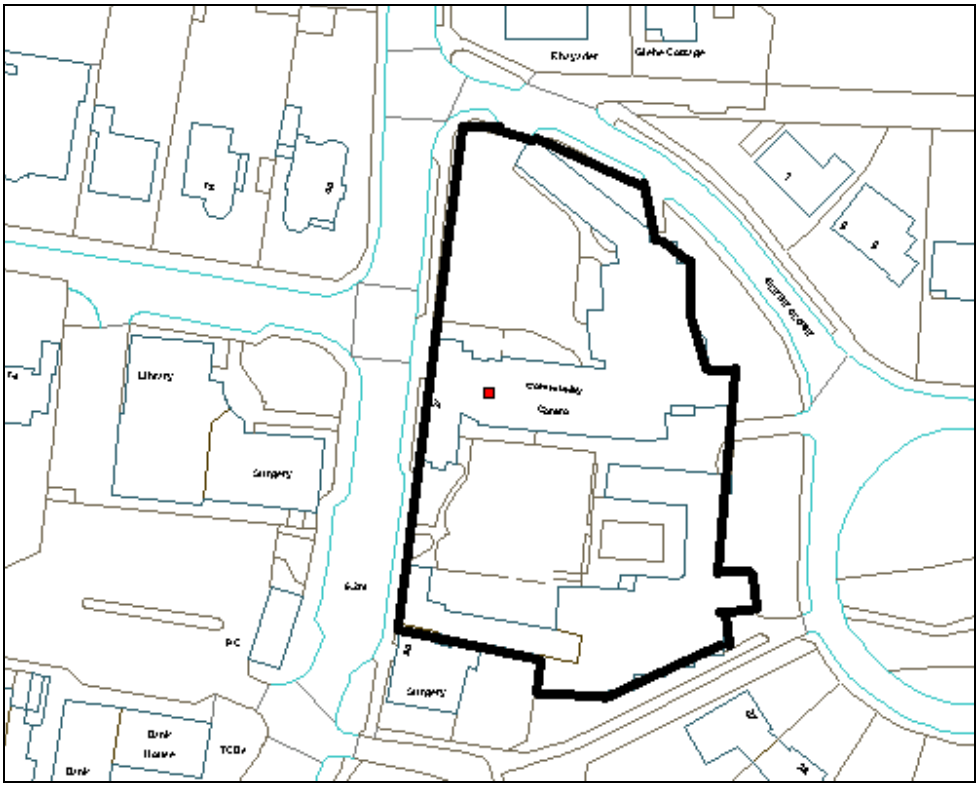
Recommendation – APPROVE

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. It is a consolidation of the officer report presented at Planning Committee 31st March 2014, the addendum to that Committee, and information received from the applicant subsequent to that Committee.

Additional information was sought by officers at the request of Members, who deferred both applications from the 31st March Committee to enable the Southwick Community Association to present further justification for the canopy and the choice of certain materials, especially the polycarbonate roof. Due to the scheduling of a meeting by the Association, this information will be reported to Members at the time of the Committee.

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
Adur District Conservation Advisory Group:-

AWDM/0149/14 Refuse: This is felt to be inappropriate & unnecessary. The design is out of character with the building. If applicant feels strongly about the need to promote the main entrance this could be achieved with a more attractive sign of a more traditional nature which would look attractive & blend well with this important building in a conservation area.

AWDM/0164/14 – In view of the foregoing item - Refuse

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 buildings in community use.

The Southwick Community centre is run by Southwick Community Association, a registered charity. The need to upgrade the entrance was debated by the governing Board of Trustees at the Community Association's 67th Annual General Meeting held in June 2013. Centre users were then consulted on the new canopy and entrance project in a consultative forum, an open meeting offering informal feedback and discussion. Drawings were also displayed in the Foyer for a month, with an invitation for comments. No adverse comments were received.

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 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, in the opinion of your officers, the statutory tests for new development in a Conservation Area and to a Listed Building have been satisfied, and the proposal is in compliance with the advice laid out in the companion Practice Guide to the defunct PPS5.

Loss of Lime Tree

Following negotiations with the agent, the Lime tree, an important feature of the site and of pleasing appearance, is no longer intended to be felled. It is positioned close the front entrance and the new canopy structure.

The applicant has agreed for the canopy footings and support for the signage wall to be hand dug. Where necessary, tree roots will be severed cleanly. Excavation of the new rainwater drainage from the canopy will be similarly undertaken. The existing drainage runs will not be rerouted, as this will disturb the tree.

These measures would be sufficient to protect the health and longevity of the Lime tree, and the Council has now imposed a preservation order on it to ensure its public amenity value is preserved.

Parking and Accessibility
The parking court would be unaffected by the proposal. The upgrading of the front entrance would improve access so the community building is accessible to all.

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

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 to 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
3. Footings for the canopy and centre support for the signage wall and excavation of rainwater drainage from the canopy be hang dug

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