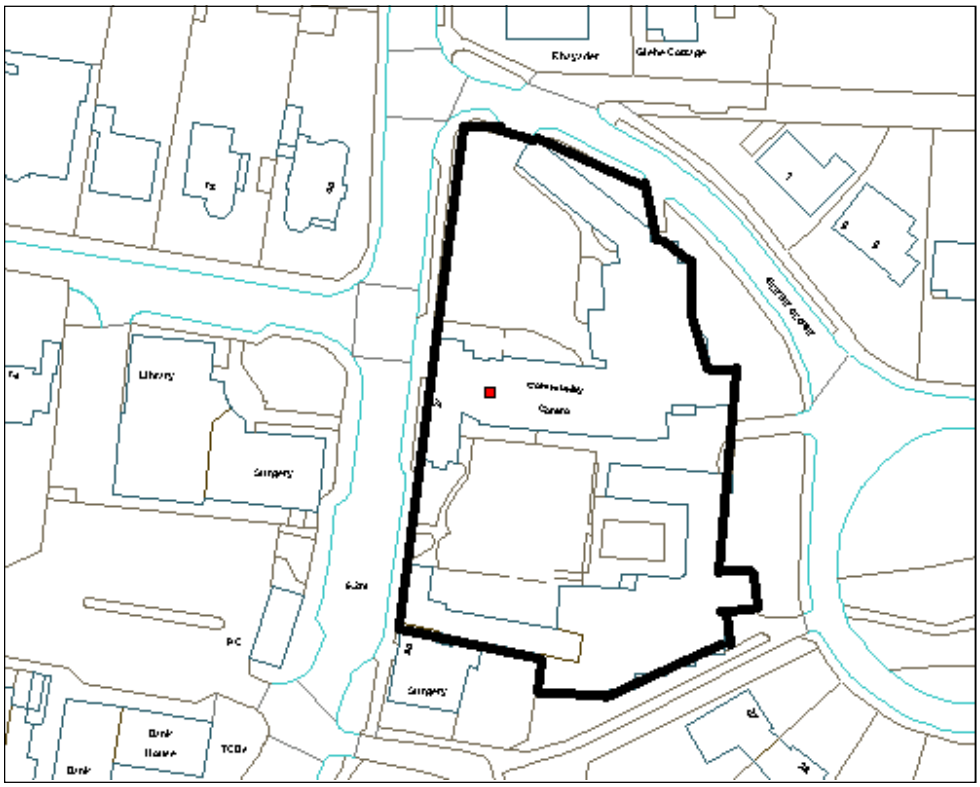
Application Numbers: AWDM/1956/16 & AWDM/1958/16 **Recommendation – APPROVE both applications**

Site: **Southwick Community Centre Southwick Street**

Proposal: **Planning Permission: Proposed entrance canopy and alterations to existing gates, removal of existing tree and replacement with new tree.**
Listed Building Consent: Proposed entrance canopy and alterations to existing gates

Applicant: Mr Bob Ryder Ward: Eastbrook
Case Officer: Matthew Porter



Not to Scale

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Proposal, Site and Surroundings

The application site 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 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.

Members will recall in 2014 an application was made by South Community Association for an upgrade to the main entrance of the Community Centre, and removal of a Lime tree. Work was also planned for altering the internal foyer and office area. These plans were refused and a TPO was placed on the Lime tree and only the internal works were subsequently carried out.

Since then, the Association has sought to amend their canopy and wall proposal, aided by their detailed research into the history of the centre. The Association has now applied for this amended proposal, which is part of a wider scheme of investment for Southwick Community Centre. 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.

The Association has identified a need to increase the "trading activity" of the Centre, in particular the café and catering. A charitable trading company is being set up to achieve this.

They believe it is necessary to make the Centre's entry points more visible (by widening of the gateway to the garden) to help secure higher revenue, and that a new entrance area is essential for this business plan. New signage is also proposed, as well as the removal of an existing Lime tree at the main entrance.

It is proposed to double the existing gateway width with a new cast iron gate and new stone piers that would match the Wealden Sandstone of the Homestead.

The new entrance area will be canopy made of brick, flint and glass with an insert sculptured panel.

The new entrance consists of a free-standing wall, built in brick and flint, inset with a commissioned artwork cut through and etched into weathered steel. The wall will be furnished with an in-built solid wood bench.

The brick of the new wall will be selected to match the existing pale and contrasting bricks used in the centre. The flint will be similar to that used in the 1960s wing. The

weathered-steel sculpture will use Corten type steel with varying shades of reddish-grey-brown.

The second element is a glass canopy, extending over most of the paved area. The glazing bars will be power coated steel/aluminium in copper-brown colour.

Also proposed is a new gateway to the public garden which will replace the existing gateway, which itself was created between two adjacent flint walls in early 1950s. It would have the effect of integrating the Homestead with the whole stretch of flint waling running down to the old farmhouse (No. 24 Southwick Street). The new piers will be faced in stone to match the ashlar quoins of the Homestead, a distinctive feature of this Listed Building. The new metal gates will be cast iron incorporating sections of original new designs reflecting the heritage of the site. It is suggested that the widening of the gate would reveal more of the large community centre memorial garden and 'Garden Room' – and lead to greater public appreciation of this fine amenity.

The new piers will be Wealden Sandstone. The majority of the Homestead's ashlar quoins are Wealden Sandstone. The new ironwork gates using a pattern-book design and finished in gloss black.

The Association believes the existing Lime Tree is a visual barrier to the Centre's main entrance and that it prevents the construction of a proper entrance area, as well as carrying risks and liabilities for the Association and the freeholder. They believe the loss of the tree would be offset by new landscaping around the site, including on Glebe Close and planting of a replacement tree. This new tree would be planted away from the Centre buildings where a tree previously stood.

New signage is proposed around the site.

The Association believes this development would make the Centre more visible and attractive to the public, strengthening its economic future to help create new jobs. It is believed the appearance along Southwick Street would be improved with greater visibility and better access to the public garden, and a more attractive appearance achieved on Glebe Close with more quality trees and better landscaping that would also deal with the problem of anti-social parking. Overall, the Association believes the development would be a big improvement to the quality of the Conservation Area.

In resubmitting their application, the Association has written an 'Evidence of Damage and Liabilities' report in respect of the preserved lime tree which is proposed to be removed.

The site, a former farmstead with agricultural buildings, is now a complex of community rooms and facilities which form Southwick Community Centre. The Centre is within the "Manor House" Character Area of the Southwick Conservation Area. One of the community buildings, the Homestead – a grander house built on the western frontage of

the farmstead site – is Grade II Listed. Nearly all the other buildings were built in later years.

The Centre is leased to Southwick Community Association by the freeholder, Adur District Council. The Association has managed, developed and improved the site for the benefit of the community.

Relevant Planning History

AWDM/0595/14
Application for Listed Building Consent for internal alterations and 2 new roof lights
Approved 03.07.2014

AWDM/0223/14
Section 211 Notice under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to fell one Lime tree in the Southwick Conservation Area
Refused 11.04.2014

AWDM/0164/14
Listed Building Consent application for new canopy and wall at main entrance and various internal alterations
Refused 02-05-2014

AWDM/0149/14
A new canopy and wall at main entrance
Refused 02-05-2014

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

Arboricultural Officer

The Lime tree T1 is an established feature of the Community Centre and the area, and can be seen from many viewpoints. It is considered important to the visual amenity and character of the Southwick Conservation Area that the tree is retained. As a mature large tree it cannot be easily replaced, and I do not consider the tree to be a barrier to future development, and no overriding reason has been presented to fell this protected tree. My recommendation is that the felling of this tree is refused**.**

Estates

1st comment: 1st Clearflow conducted a survey of the drains around the base of the tree in 2013 and carried out repairs. The survey conducted in June 2016 found that further damage had occurred to the drains since 2013 and the report concluded "If possible it would be good to have the tree removed."

Following the report, Technical Services advised that the tree was too close to the building. The roots had caused problems and the weight of the tree, sitting above the drains, was also a cause for concern. As this would cause continuous maintenance, Technical Services recommendation was that the TPO is removed.

The meeting held last year went over the problems caused by the tree and the general consensus was that the tree should be removed

2nd comment: Our maintenance history indicates works were carried out in 2013: problems have returned with the tree roots requiring similar drain lining works required.

If the tree remains in position then we will be getting call backs to resolve the kinds of issues on a regular basis, and as the tree gets bigger the problems will increase.

The tree is so close to the building that I don't believe a new tree would be permitted in this location if it was planted today.

Representations

Adur District Conservation Advisory Group: *Recommend refuse.*

Throughout its history this successful and much loved building has been transformed from an historic homestead into a thriving community centre with designs which blended well with existing, using matching materials linked into a gradually modernised design which succeeded in enhancing the original building without losing its identity.

Alas these applications have, to members minds, done the opposite & give the appearance of commercial building so often seen in the past. Bearing in mind this area of the site faces north the dark grey facia panels give an overall depressing appearance & the materials proposed bear no resemblance to the age of the building. The overall effect is a harsh/ severe design which bears no resemblance to the age of this building or its original design. It should be borne in mind that when the original plans for the public library/G.P. surgery building sited opposite the community centre were submitted to Adur D.C. there was a public outcry due to its modernistic/commercial design. This resulted in new plans being submitted which were more in keeping with this older area of Southwick, using knapped flint panels & brickwork of like colour & design as is predominantly used in this area of Southwick.

There is no question that this Centre needs to improve its facilities due to its popular reputation. However, the applicant should be encouraged to follow the modus operandi of its predecessors by endeavouring to enhance this historic building by producing a design which although modern, could enhance the existing, in particular with regard to use of colour & materials. It is also felt that the wall which links the Sussex Barn to the listed homestead, is an ideal bridge between these two key buildings, not old itself but sympathetic to both. It is the considered opinion of this group that the application should be refused on the grounds that the overall design conflicts with the existing building in an attempt to give an overall effect of a modern 21st century building which is in conflict with the tenets of conservation areas and listed building status. With regard to the lime tree located by the existing entrance, although members are loathe to support the loss of such trees, it is clear that it could, if not already, create problems with the building. Therefore, we cannot object to its removal provided that there is a replacement.

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.

The Committee should also consider the application in accordance with Section 66 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 a Listed Building's setting. The Committee should consider the application in accordance with Section 72 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) and pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the setting of the Conservation Area.

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework
National Planning Practice Guidance
Adur Local Plan 1996 (saved) policies: AG1, AH7, AB3-11
Adur Local Plan 2016 (submission) policies:
Companion Practice Guide to PPS5: Protecting the Historical Environment
The proposal is entirely consistent with Adur Local Plan policies AB3, AB4, AB5, AB6 AB7, AB8, AB9, AB10, AB11, ab19, ab25

Planning Assessment

Principle

Both the National Planning Policy Framework and Adur Local Plan policies support, in principle, the upgrading of community infrastructure - including buildings in community use as well as the upgrading of this Listed Building since it would sustain the heritage asset by continuing a viable use consistent with its conservation.

Conservation Area and architectural and historic interest of Listed Buildings their setting, and visual amenity

The existing north wing is not original, built in the 1960s. It is single storey flat roof with plain fenestration high-level windows.

The new entrance area would add a feature to this weak elevation. It would be viewed in a separate context to the Listed Homestead Building.

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 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.

The new windows would be either of white aluminium or painted white timber (the centre has yet to secure an appropriate supplier). The drawings show the new windows to be proportionally thicker than the existing, due to the suggested differing exterior material and alteration of the openings. Because an appropriate system has yet to be secured, and the windows being replaced are those closest to the historic part of the building, it is necessary to condition any consent to enable negotiation on an appropriate window system. In determining what system is appropriate it is important there remains continuity with the rest of the existing fenestration along the length of the extension building.

The proposed works are to the entrance and foyer of the community centre. Designed with an emphasis on horizontal planes, this is a modern extension built in 1966. Its pale yellow brickwork, single storey flat roof, covered rear walkway with structurally expressive piers, and mixture of large picture windows, clerestory lights, and high level

openings, reflects this. It is readily distinguishable from the historic parts of the Listed Building, to which it physically abuts.

The interior of the entrance foyer and office has no historic attributes, and the proposed changes to it would not be deleterious to the special qualities and architectural character of the Listing, or the setting of the wider group of buildings that make up 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.

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.

Given the above, 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. The special qualities of the Conservation Area, including its setting, identified in the Council's adopted SPG appraisal of it are therefore also preserved.

Loss of tree

The loss of the tree has previously been considered unacceptable and there is little doubt that, especially in summer, it makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.

It is understood that drainage surveys have been carried by the Association, including one in 2016 at the request of the freeholder. This survey indicated that more fractures in drainage pipes had occurred since an earlier survey in 2014. The estimated costs of repairs were quoted as £7,000 (the cost falling to the freeholder). A Disability Access Audit in 2010 referred to uneven paving at the main entrance and the freeholder re-laid the slabs in early 2015. However, the Association is concerned the paving is still moving and currently bears the liability under insurance claims.

The Association believes it is not practical to divert the drains away from the tree as it would involve extensive reconstruction of the drainage system. In the process of work being carried out, damage would have to done to the roots. The costs have not been estimated and it would involve closure of the Centre as these are the drains to all the toilets and kitchen. It is understood that the pipes could be repaired and this would cost £7,000 but this would not be a permanent solution as tree roots would continue to be disturbed.

The acceptability of the extension in design terms has already been outlined above. The issue of damage caused by the tree is a further consideration and although the Arboricultural Officer considers that the loss of the tree is unnecessary, the Technical Services and Estates section are both of the view that the tree should be removed.

While it is regrettable that the tree will be lost, it is considered that the wider community benefits of the proposal allied to the structural issues outlined above mean that on balance that the application can be supported. A replacement tree can be secured in a more appropriate position with species and maturity to be agreed by the Council.

Residential amenity

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

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.

Recommendation

APPROVE both planning permission and listed building consent

AWDM/1956/16

Subject to Conditions:

1. Standard time limit
2. Approved Plans
3. Approval of Materials
4. Replacement tree to be planted in accordance with details to be agreed

AWDM/1958/16

Subject to Conditions:

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