Expiry Date - 19/09/2023

Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/1007/23 **Recommendation – APPROVE**

Site: **Beechwood Hall Wykeham Road Worthing West Sussex**

Proposal: **Two rapid electric vehicle charge points and associated electrical feeder within car park of the Brewhouse and Kitchen Public House**

Application Number: AWDM/1008/23 **Recommendation – GRANT CONSENT**

Site: **Beechwood Hall Wykeham Road Worthing West Sussex**

Proposal: **Listed Building Consent for Two rapid electric vehicle charge points and associated electrical feeder within car park of the Brewhouse and Kitchen Public House**

Date of site visit: 01.08.2023

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: N

Site and Surroundings

The application site comprises part of the car park of the 'Brewhouse + Kitchen' (Beechwood Hall) accessed from Wykeham Road.

Beechwood Hall comprises a Grade II Listed building set in landscaped grounds with a car park to the South and East. It is currently in use by the Brewhouse + Kitchen public house/restaurant on the ground-floor/basement, with letting rooms on the upper floors.

The landscaped grounds and car park adjoin Amelia Park to the east, overlooked by Park Crescent, a classical terrace of Regency villas (Grade II* Listed) located approximately 70 metres to the north and east. Purpose-built flat blocks Beechwood Court and Wessex Court lie to the south fronting Tennyson Road and Richmond Road respectively.

Beechwood Hall dates from 1823 and was originally built as a pair of semi-detached dwellings designed by the Brighton Architect Amon Wilds in a 'rustic alpine style' and known as North and South Swiss Cottages. The Swiss Cottages formed part of an architectural composition together with the terraced villas which make up Park Crescent (credited to the same Architect). It is thought the concept of the Swiss Cottages was probably intended to be a 'discovery' on walks to the woods where the parkland setting of Park Crescent

gave way to a less formal wooded landscape (now Amelia Park). The property was converted into a hotel 'Beechwood Hall' in the 1930s with various subsequent iterations as a public house/carvery restaurant before latterly being renovated throughout as the Brewhouse + Kitchen. The landscaped grounds were developed at the same time as this refurbishment to provide a variety of informal structures/seating booths for outside dining/drinking, and the car park enlarged with additional spaces (AWDM/1923/18 and AWDM/1925/18). A condition of the planning permission required the installation of 2no EV charging points. These have been installed in the SE corner of the car park bordering the Eastern site boundary with Amelia Park.

The site is located within the Park Crescent Conservation Area and a number of the trees within the grounds subject to Tree Preservation Order No.14 of 1997.

Proposal

Planning permission and listed building consent is sought by Osprey Charging Network to install 2no rapid electric vehicle chargers and an associated electrical feeder pillar in the car park, adjacent to (and in addition to) the existing two EV chargers (also Osprey chargers).

The application is accompanied by a supporting statement that states: *"While electric vehicles currently only account for 2.9% of vehicles on UK roads, that number is expected to rise to over 30% by 2030. Not all homes and EV drivers will have access to off-street parking (over 30%) and they will be reliant on affordable and accessible public charging infrastructure. Osprey Charging Network's chargers are the most open to EV drivers. All cars, regardless of charging port can charge on the network and customers have an option to simply use a contactless payment or an App, RFID or subscription service. We cater to all drivers (including those with reduced mobility) and if there are drivers who regularly rely on and use our charger points our subscription service allows them to sign up to a cheaper tariff*."

This proposal to expand the existing provision results from the high usage of the existing charge points.

The 2no existing EV chargers are positioned at the head of the 2no southernmost parking spaces within a bank of 5no parking bays adjoining the Eastern site boundary towards the Sothern end of the site fronting Wykeham Road. A feeder cabinet to support the existing infrastructure is positioned within an open area to the south of the parking bays. The 2no rapid chargers (Tritium Charge Point 75kW) each 2m high x 0.9m wide x 0.3m deep with 2no steel bollards on either side, would be positioned centrally at the head of the remaining 3 bays within this bank. The chargers would each sit on a concrete base sitting flush with the level of the car park. An additional feeder cabinet/pillar (2.3m high x 1.6m wide x 0.8m deep) would be located to the south side of the existing cabinet.

For completeness, this report covers the applications for both planning and listed building consent.

Relevant Planning History:

AWDM/1923/18 External alterations plus single-storey extension with roof plant to west elevation plus kitchen extraction duct (enclosed within faux chimney) on west roof slope. Revised access arrangements, re-modelling of car park and garden area with formation of external seating areas including paved terrace and decking, covered booth seating and enclosed pergola at north end of the garden. Permitted 06.03.2020.

AWDM/1925/28 Listed Building Consent for Two rapid electric vehicle charge points and associated electrical feeder within car park of the Brewhouse and Kitchen Public House. Permitted 06.03.2020.

Consultations:

Adur and Worthing Council's

Conservation and Design Architect: Least harmful location.
I am slightly surprised that the new Feeder Cabinet appears to be a larger footprint than the current one.

Tree and Landscape Officer: From looking at the photos and plans I do not have any objection to the proposed new charging units and cabinets.

The Worthing Society: The Applicant has been mindful of the need to protect the landscape and setting of the listed building. I am therefore pleased to advise you we have no objection to the proposal.

Representations: None received.

Relevant Planning Policies

Worthing Local Plan policies (WBC 2023): SP1, SP2, DM5, DM15, DM23, DM24
National Planning Policy Framework (HCLG 2021)
National Planning Practice Guidance
Park Crescent Conservation Area Appraisal

Planning Assessment

There is no objection in principle to the development. The NPPF states that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate. Within this context paragraph 112 states that applications for development should (amongst other things) be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations.

The supporting text to policy DM15 identifies that nationally in the last 10 years, transport has become the largest greenhouse gas emitting sector, representing over a quarter of emissions and that these emissions need to be reduced urgently to ensure the UK meets its targets to tackle air pollution and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. To achieve this developments are encouraged provide charging infrastructure for electric vehicles (paragraph 5.209).

The key considerations are the effects of the proposals on the character and appearance of the area including on nearby trees, the setting of the Listed Building, and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Visual Amenity

The proposed 2no rapid chargers would be located further (North) into the car park than the existing 2 units, but still visible in public views from the road above the flint and brick dressed wall which defines the boundary with Wykeham Road/Richmond Road. The new feeder cabinet/pillar will be closer to the edge of the road than the existing cabinet (which will be retained). Although clearly visible, the proposed additional equipment will be viewed against the backdrop of existing trees in Amelia Park and in the context of the existing car park will not appear intrusively out of keeping or harmful to visual amenity. A black finish to the exterior will help the cabinet housing/pillar recede against the background of trees and overhanging canopies.

The appearance of the car park would be much improved by carrying out new soft planting in the SE corner of the car park (where a TPO tree was felled where it had been causing damage to the flint wall), and by removing the redundant Heras fencing along the Eastern site boundary (now overgrown with vegetation). However, these matters fall outside of the control of the Applicant.

The Council's Tree and Landscape Officer is satisfied that the works to install the equipment would have no adverse impact on the nearby protected trees within Amelia Park.

Effects on Designated Heritage Asset

Policy DM24 states that development should not adversely affect heritage assets or their setting (including important views that contribute to its setting). Where a proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

In response to the comments of the Council's Conservation Architect, the Applicant has responded to state that the proposed feeder pillar is larger than the existing cabinet/pillar as it is a newer, up-rated electrical infrastructure, which allows for a higher charging rate (KW) meaning that vehicles using the new chargers will be able to be charged more quickly.

Although the rapid charger units/pillar will be visible in views from the street, consideration has been given to minimising the impact on the setting of the listed building and in this respect they are positioned in the least sensitive part of the site, furthest from the building itself.

The utilitarian appearance of the plant/equipment will have some impact on the woodland character and appearance of this part of the Park Crescent Conservation Area. However, the equipment/plant is modest in scale and can easily be removed from the car park in the future (as and when developing technologies allow). The resulting harm is therefore less than substantial and outweighed in this case by the public benefit that can be attributed to supporting the transition to a low carbon future and reducing greenhouse gas emissions by facilitating the use of electric vehicles.

Residential Amenity

The proposed additional plant and feeder cabinet will be in excess of 25 metres from the nearest residential properties (Beechwood Court and Wessex Court) on the opposite side of Wykeham Road/Richmond Road, a busy local distributor road and bus route, and will have no adverse effects on residential amenity.

Recommendation

AWDM/1007/23

APPROVE subject to Conditions:-

1. Drawing Numbers
2. Standard time limit
3. External housing of feeder pillar to match the black colour of the feeder pillar currently in situ on the site.
4. Remove all plant/equipment when no longer required.

AWDM/1008/23

GRANT CONSENT subject to conditions:-

1. Drawing Numbers
2. LBC time limit

Informative
Pro-Active No Amendment.

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

Case Officer: Jo Morin Date: 25.09.2023

Authorised by: Gary Peck Date: 25 September 2023