Development Management – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/0784/23 Recommendation: Approve

Site: The Huntingdon Hall, Buckingham Road, Shoreham-by-sea

Proposal: Proposed demolition of the existing Huntingdon Hall (part of Shoreham Free Church) and ancillary buildings and construction of a new church hall.

Date of Site Visit: 29th June 2023

Neighbours Checked: Y

Additional neighbour notification: N

Proposal, Site and Surroundings:

The application relates to the Shoreham Free Church on the east side of Buckingham Road, on the junction with Gordon Road. The building to the north of the Church is known as Huntingdon Hall, built in 1948. It is of poor quality construction and has asbestos walls and roof. The supporting Design and Access Statement advises that it is expensive to heat due to its poor insulation levels.

The application proposes to demolish the hall and construct a new facility to include a kitchen, a cafe, a food bank storage room, improved toilet facilities and a shower and laundry for use by homeless people. An air source heat pump is also proposed. The hall would be in the same location but would project further forward slightly. The additional facilities required means that the building would extend up to the boundary with 1 Gordon Road to the east and would continue along the length of that boundary.

The hall is to have a monopitch roof with zinc finish, brick walls with knapped flint and brick quoins to the front facing Buckingham Road. The roof will pitch away from the northern boundary and will rise to a height of 5.8m at its highest point. It will contain a small first floor area for sleeping bag storage. The extension at the rear will have a lower roof of 4.2m maximum height, sloping down to a parapet wall which will run along the boundary with 1 Gordon Road at a height of, as amended, 2.5m (reduced from 2.8m as originally submitted).

1 Gordon Road is a detached dwelling to the east. To the north there are sheltered housing flats in a block known as Oakland Court. The main Church building is directly to the south and there are residential and commercial uses opposite.

Planning History:

AWDM/0683/18 - Erection of 3no. detached outbuildings to rear (east), one for storage of food for Shoreham Food Bank, one replacement storage shed and one bike storage shed - approved

Consultations:

West Sussex County Council: The Highways Authority has no objection. Huntingdon Hall is accessed from Buckingham Road, which is a two-way single carriageway road. There is a 30 miles an hour speed restriction along this road with parking restriction in the form of double yellow lines. The existing access will be retained for future uses. An inspection of data supplied to WSCC by Sussex Police over a period of last five years reveals there has been no incident of personal injury reported near to the site access. This indicates the site access has been operating in a safe manner in its current form.
Delivery and servicing will be in line with the existing arrangements. The number of car parking spaces will be retained with a slight realignment of spaces. There are no additional vehicular trips associated with the proposed development; hence, no concerns are anticipated in terms of highway safety or capacity.

Representations

Original Plans:
11 letters of support received:

- The Church is a community asset and houses a food bank which is a vital service
- The improved facilities would help with supporting more of the community
- Design will bring an old looking building into the 21st century
- Existing hall has limitations and is at the end of its life
- Improved disabled facilities
- Removal of asbestos

1 letter of objection received from the occupiers of 1 Gordon Road:

- Height and length of wall on boundary will be oppressive and restrict light
- How will asbestos be removed safely?
- Noise from ASHP

Amended Plans: 1 letter received from the occupiers of 1 Gordon Road seeking clarification on a number of matters

Relevant Planning Policies

Adur Local Plan 2017 Policies 15, 18, 28, 33, 34, 36
Sustainable Energy SPD (August 2019)
Adur Planning and Climate Change Checklist (June 2021)
WSCC Guidance on Parking at New Developments (Sept 2020).
National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021)

Planning Assessment

Principle

The proposal comprises an improvement to an existing community facility. Policy 33 states that the Council will protect and support improvements to social and community facilities. The proposal is therefore supported in principle subject to no adverse impact upon residential and visual amenity.

Visual amenity

The existing hall has a brick facade with parapet which hides the hall behind. The new building will be more striking and will have more of a presence in the street scene, through its increased scale, use of materials and forward projection. The extent of forward projection has been reduced, however, following the receipt of amended plans and is considered to be acceptable.

It is considered that the proposal complements the main Church well and will enhance the overall appearance of the site.

The rear extension is more modest in scale and will not have a harmful impact when viewed from Gordon Road.

Residential amenity

1 Gordon Road is a detached house which is positioned a sufficient distance from the extension and new hall to not be adversely affected in terms of light and outlook. The height of the wall of the extension, at 2.8m, running along the length of the boundary could have been overbearing when viewed from the garden of 1 Gordon Road and the plans have been amended to reduce it to 2.5m, which is considered to be acceptable.

To the north, there is a window in the ground floor of one of the sheltered housing flats which would have had its outlook and light affected by the increased height and forward projection of the hall as originally submitted. The amended plans have reduced the extent of forward projection so that the extension now stops short of the affected window, thereby protecting the amenities of that occupier.

An air source heat pump is to be installed on the boundary with 1 Gordon Road, behind the new boundary wall, which drops in height at that point in order to maintain light to the baptistry from an existing window. The neighbour at No.1 is concerned at noise from the unit but ASHPs are considered to be acceptable in residential areas and in many cases are permitted development. There are no noise concerns therefore with this aspect of the proposal.

A cafe is proposed for users and visitors to the Church which will replace an existing smaller refreshments area within the church. It is to be used by the congregation and is not a commercial cafe (drinks are provided free of charge).

Parking and access

The amended plans and reduced footprint of the extension mean that no parking spaces are to be lost or need to be reconfigured on site. There is no highway objection to the proposal.

Sustainability

The proposal will provide a more energy efficient and better insulated modern hall with an ASHP to heat it.

Recommendation

APPROVE

Subject to Conditions:-

1. Approved Plans
2. Standard 3 year time limit
3. Materials
4. CMP
5. No windows on east or north elevations
6. Obscure glaze WC window
7. Hours of opening 9-6 every day
8. Hall and cafe to be used in connection with the Shoreham Free Church only and shall not be used independently

Is recommendation contrary to letter(s) of representation Y

1. 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.

2. ASHP guidance

Case Officer: Peter Barnett Date: 29 August 2023

Authorised by: Gary Peck Date: 29 August 2023