Expiry Date - 11/04/2025

Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/0161/25 **Recommendation – APPROVE**

Site: **Heene Community Centre 122 - 126 Heene Road Worthing West Sussex**

Proposal: **Conservatory to replace an existing covered courtyard**

Date of site visit: Previous application 13/01/25

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: N

Site and Surroundings

The site is located on a corner plot to the east of Heene Road and to the north of Winchester Road within a predominantly residential area in Worthing. The property is within the Heene Road Conservation Area and is identified as a positive contributor to the conservation area and as a Local Interest Building. The property comprises a large detached building with flint and brick elevations and a tiled pitched roof with gable features and dormers to the west. Several modern additions have been added to the east elevation. The site is enclosed by flint and brick walls with hedging behind and a car park to the east. There are several mature trees to the perimeter of the site. Access to the site is via the main entrance to the east of the building and via the covered courtyard to the west of the building.

The building was constructed as a school in the late nineteenth century and later became Heene Community Centre. A sympathetic extension was built to the north in the late twentieth century. The Heene Road frontage of this later extension was set further back into the site than the original building, with a link (which contains the cafe) set even further back.

A timber pergola structure was introduced in 2016 to the west of the cafe, to create a setting for customers sitting outside. A fabric screen was added to the front of this structure, to enable the outside space to function in all weathers.

There are no protected trees on site.

Proposal

Planning permission is sought for a conservatory to replace the existing timber pergola to the west frontage of the building. The timber structure to be replaced sits within an alcove of the building created by two projecting gables. The pergola has fabric screens that can be closed to protect from weather.

The proposed conservatory would infill the same space as the current structure using the walls of the existing building and extending approximately 4.7m deep (3.29m from the west wall) x 6.8m wide. The roof of the conservatory would extend back in to the alcove (as per the existing pergola) with a flat and monopitch roof that tilts down towards the building, tucking in under the eaves. The existing French doors and windows to the west elevation of the building, between the café and conservatory would be replaced with bi-fold doors.

The conservatory would consist of glazing within a black metal frame and a single ply membrane roof with rooflights above. A box gutter would be installed where the conservatory roof adjoins the main building.

The conservatory would be used as additional seating space for the café.

Relevant Planning History:

AWDM/1402/24 - Single storey extension to replace an existing covered courtyard – Withdrawn as considered unacceptable

PREAPP/0168/24 – Proposed conservatory - Acceptable in principle subject to detailed design drawings to be submitted for new application

AWDM/0351/20 - Provision of conservatory to west elevation - Not proceeded with

There is no relevant consent for the existing pergola and therefore the current structure is unauthorised.

Consultations:

The Worthing Society - *This distinctive building is located within the Heene Conservation Area. I have now had the opportunity to discuss the plans for the conservatory with our Heritage Team. The application form says that the materials for the conservatory comprise black metal frame and solid roof with flat roof lights falling towards the building, so will not visible from road. I am pleased to advise you, therefore, that the Society does not object to this Planning Application.*

Design and Conservation Architect –

28/03/25 - The proposed roof would be a 'flat' roof finished with a single ply membrane. Although we have no sections, from the proposed roof plan the section of roof in the recess of the existing buildings would appear to be flat whilst the rest of the roof would have a slight incline. Three 'flat' rooflights are proposed in this section of the roof. A section through the new roof would be helpful to show that the construction/insulation would fit within the height shown on the proposed elevation. It is worth noting that we do not appear to have a DAS/Heritage statement on line, despite being in the Heene Road CA.
The brick surround to the existing window is a positive feature in the CA, so it would be beneficial to keep any blocking of this window well recessed.

23/04/25 - Following the submission of a section drawing and D and A Statement:

Although this is a section drawing, it doesn't show any construction details. Please ask for a measurement for the depth of the roof construction to confirm that it is as shown on the elevation. Otherwise I think we have everything and it is supportable.

Officer response – A measurement was provided on a revised section drawing to show the above.

Representations:

None received

Relevant Planning Policies

Worthing Local Plan policies (WBC 2023): SP1, DM5, DM8, DM23, DM24
National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG 2024)
National Planning Practice Guidance

Planning Assessment

There is no objection in principle to improvements and alterations to community facilities within the built-up area. The key considerations are the effects on the character of the conservation area and Local Interest Building and the visual and residential amenities of the locality.

Pre-application Advice

The following advice was given in relation to a Pre-application enquiry relating to a conservatory proposed in this location:

Limited information has been provided in terms of design, other than a black metal framed, rectangular form and therefore it is difficult to provide specific advice, however, the principle of a conservatory in this position is likely to be acceptable. The design of the structure and how it relates to the existing building and the surrounding conservation area, needs to be carefully considered and will be key to any decision. Due to its prominent location facing onto Heene Road the structure would be visible from the conservation area and therefore a bespoke design solution may be more appropriate than a standard 'off the peg' design. How the structure assimilates with the existing building and integrates with the existing roof and eaves will be a key factor in influencing the design and I would advise seeking the advice of an architect on this project.

The addition of a conservatory in this location is likely to be acceptable in principle however this will be subject to the specific design of the conservatory and how it integrates with the existing building and the surrounding conservation area.

The current application has been submitted following the above advice.

Impact on Visual Amenity, Character of Conservation Area and Local interest Building

The building is a heritage asset designated as a Local Interest building and located within the Heene Conservation Area. The Council has a duty to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area and the special qualities of any heritage asset.

Paragraph 212 of the NPPF states: *When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.*

The building is located in a prominent location facing on to Heene Road and with the side and east elevations clearly visible from Winchester Road to the south. The west elevation of the building where the conservatory is proposed is visible from Heene Road through the gates to the courtyard entrance to the community centre and café; the rest of this frontage is obscured by the flint and brick walls to the boundary and tall shrubs and hedging behind these walls. Mature trees within the site provide additional screening of the building.

The proposed conservatory would replace the existing (unauthorised) pergola structure. Although unauthorised this open structure and its temporary nature are not considered to have any significant impact on the character of the building or the surrounding area. The proposal is to replace this pergola structure with a lightweight conservatory as proposed by PREAPP/0168/24 which was considered *"as a concept, a visually lightweight structure with lots of glazing would not disrupt the current building hierarchy."*

The previous application AWDM/1402/24 for a brick built extension with flat roof, in the same location, was withdrawn following advice that a solid structure that aligned with and extended the original school building would unbalance the front façade of the building and would be unacceptable. The applicant was advised that the application would be refused and to revert back to the pre-application scheme for a conservatory.

The proposed conservatory is of lightweight appearance with a black metal frame and fully glazed elevations. Although this occupies the same footprint as the withdrawn extension scheme, a conservatory can be clearly read as an addition to the building and does not compete with the original building or undermine its historic significance. The proposed conservatory would preserve the architectural features of the original building and has been specifically designed to fit around these features avoiding any harm to the integrity of the building.

The conservatory would infill the gap between two projecting gables and due to its lightweight glazed appearance would not dominate or detract from the attractive façade of the building or the surrounding conservation area or undermine its designation as a Local Interest building. The proposal is considered to integrate well with the existing building, and respects the defining features of the building.

The replacement of the existing doors and windows that form the west elevation leading into the conservatory, with bi-fold doors would not result in any loss or harm to original features.

The proposed conservatory would not detract from the special features of the local interest building or detract from the character or appearance of the conservation area. There would be no significant harm to the visual amenities of the locality as a result of this application.

Residential Amenity

The most affected neighbours are No.128 and 130 Heene Road to the north and the residents of Winchester Court opposite the site to the west.

The proposed conservatory would enclose a space already used for seating but offering full weather protection instead of an open structure, thereby reducing noise associated with this use.

The conservatory is located to the centre of the west façade, over 13m from No.128 to the north and over 35m from the flats to the west and would not have any overbearing impact or result in overlooking or loss of privacy.

There would be no detrimental impact on the residential amenities of adjacent occupiers as a result of this application.

Recommendation

APPROVE subject to Conditions:-

1. Drawing Numbers
2. Standard time limit
3. The black metal frame and glazing of the conservatory hereby permitted shall, prior to commencement of use of the additional floorspace thereby created, be completed as specified on the application documents, unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
4. The eaves and roof of the existing building shall not be altered or bisected to accommodate the conservatory hereby permitted, other than for the provision of guttering, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Informative

Expiry Date - 11/04/2025

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.

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

Case Officer: Amanda Haslett Date: 08/05/25

Authorised by: Louise Prew Date: 09/05/2025