Expiry Date - 29/10/2025

Development Management – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/0958/25 Recommendation – APPROVE

Site: Worthing Baptist Church 21 Christchurch Road Worthing West Sussex

Proposal: Replacement of roof on the south side of the building with the inclusion of solar panels

Date of site visit: 22/10/2025

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: N

Site and Surroundings

Worthing Baptist Church is a traditional flint stone building with brick detail and slate roof on the west side of Christchurch Road at the junction with Cambridge Road. The building is set back from the roads with a low flint stone wall.

The site is in a primarily residential area with a range of older style housing.

Proposal

Planning permission is sought to replace the roof on the south side of the building with integrated solar panels. The replacement roof is required due to water penetration.

The roof would consist of Spanish slates, Marley ridge tiles (slate black to match roof pitch) and solar panels black frame monocrystalline.

Relevant Planning History:

None relevant

Consultations:

None undertaken

Representations:

One letter of support

One letter of objection from 1 Cambridge Road

This is an area of old Victorian houses and the church itself is a beautiful building whose character would be compromised by the ugliness of so many panels. It will also be an incredibly ugly view to all of our neighbours.

The church itself does not operate well with the road and they do not seem to show much care for the residents. I fear this work will be of the same ilk and will cause a devaluation of our properties.

The church always leaves its large green bin out on the street. I am disabled and this can often be a hazard to anyone in a wheelchair etc. Neighbours often put the bin back into the church garden and they always put it back out on to the street again with no thought for residents.

The church takes no responsibility and nor does it try and prevent the daily hard drug use that takes place on its grounds. Every day residents, visitors and school children are subjected to people injecting drugs and often urinating in sight.

I think perhaps the church should concentrate more on the wellbeing and care of its local residents, rather than bringing down the area with very ugly proposals that will also bring down the overall look of the area.

Relevant Planning Policies

National Planning Policy Framework 2024
National Planning Practice Guidance

Worthing Local Plan
SP1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development)
SP2 (Climate Change)
DM5 (Quality of the Built Environment)
DM17 (Energy)
DM22 (Pollution)

Principle
The Council has declared a Climate Emergency and is generally supportive of sustainable, renewable energy sources in accordance with policy DM17 of the Worthing Local Plan.

Policy context
An environmental objective of the National Planning Policy Framework is '*mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.'*

Para 135 of the NPPF asks that planning decisions should ensure that developments

c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);

Para 139 states: '*Development that is not well designed should be refused... Conversely, significant weight should be given to b) outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability,*

Para 161 states: The planning system should support the transition to net zero by 2050 and take full account of all climate impacts including overheating, water scarcity, storm and flood risks and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.

Para 167 states: Local planning authorities should also give significant weight to the need to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements to existing buildings, both domestic and non-domestic (including through installation of heat pumps and solar panels where these do not already benefit from permitted development rights)

Worthing Local Plan Policy SP2 states::
'a comprehensive and integrated approach to addressing climate change will be taken, consisting of the following elements: Carbon Reduction a) Development proposals are expected to reduce the amount of energy used in construction and operation of buildings and improve energy efficiency, including retrofitting existing properties, to contribute to achieving zero carbon emissions. b) The Council will support and promote the creation of low carbon heating/cooling networks and the delivery of renewable energy schemes.

Policy DM17 states:
d) The development of renewable, low carbon, or decentralised energy schemes will be supported and community initiatives encouraged where proposals: i) are located appropriately and do not cause an unacceptable impact on surrounding uses or the local environment, landscape character or visual appearance of the area.

Visual Amenity and design

The panels are proposed on the south roof slope of Worthing Baptist Church, a traditional flint stone building with brick details. The building lies in a

prominent position on the corner with Cambridge Road. The new roof and incorporated solar panels would be visible from the street. The design of the solar panels retains the existing roof profile and roof light windows as well as new slate roofing. The building is not listed or within a conservation area. The design and location is such that it is not considered that the panels would be unduly prominent and would not have a detrimental impact on the character of the building.

Residential Amenity

The property is surrounded by residential development. The replacement roof and solar panels themselves would not directly impact on residential amenity in terms of loss of light, visual amenity or overlooking. 1 letter of objection has been received which raises concerns about the design of the roof and panels and its impact on the character of the building and detrimental residential amenity. Other matters include the operation of the building and users.

Although it is appreciated that the local resident considers that the solar panels are not visually appropriate this matter has been dealt with above and is considered not to have a detrimental impact on visual amenity. The operation of the building is appreciated but these matters are not relevant in relation to the application.

Recommendation

APPROVE subject to Conditions:-

1. Drawing Numbers
2. Standard time limit
3. Material as shown on the plans and details.
4. Solar panels to be flush with the roofslope

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.

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

Case Officer: Jackie Fox Date: 28.10.25

Authorised by: Louise Prew Date: 29/10/2025