

<b>App.No:</b> 170036 Planning Permission  170033 Listed Building Consent	<b>Decision Due Date:</b> 13 June 2017	<b>Ward:</b> Devonshire
<b>Officer:</b> Anna Clare	<b>Site visit date:</b>	<b>Type:</b> Planning Permission
<b>Site Notice(s) Expiry date:</b> 14 April 2017 <b>Neighbour Con Expiry:</b> 14 April 2017 <b>Press Notice(s):</b> Published 03 April 2017		
<b>Over 8/13 week reason:</b> Reported to committee within time		
<b>Location:</b> Central Methodist Church, Langney Road, Eastbourne		
<b>Proposal:</b> Conversion of existing meeting rooms and hall into 10no. one bedroom flats together with the retention of the existing worship space (to be read in conjunction with Listed Building Consent ref. 170033)		
<b>Applicant:</b> Mr Peter Easton		
<b>Recommendation:</b> No1) 170036 Grant planning permission subject to the S106 covering local employment initiatives and affordable housing and subject to conditions  No2 170033 Grant Listed Building Consent subject to conditions		

### **Executive Summary:**

There are two applications to be determined here; planning application and a tandem listed building consent application. Both applications propose identical content.

Members will recall that the Emanuel Churches of Eastbourne are coming together to form a common congregation and that this congregation would worship/occupy the redeveloped United Reform Church site in Upperton Road (currently subject to S106 legal agreement).

Members were informed at the application stage of the Upperton Road redevelopment scheme that in order for that new development to commence/conclude then the church community would have to fully realise their assets; in some part this meant that the redundant and vacant sites would need to be redeveloped with the monies raised contributing to the realisation of their new project/scheme. This application therefore relates to one of their portfolio of buildings that due to economic/maintenance reasons will shortly become vacant. As such it is considered that the redevelopment of the United Reform Church site is a material consideration that should be given significant weight in the assessment/decision of this scheme.

Proposed development in terms of retained historical fabric (main congregational space being retained and the limited intrusion onto the historic fabric of the hall and Sunday School building) are such that the development is considered to be acceptable in broad townscape and listed building terms.

When assessed against the lawful use of the site it is considered that the limited number of off street car parking spaces proposed is acceptable and should not give rise to any material highways impacts.

The scheme is recommended for Conditional approval subject to S106 agreement to cover affordable housing and local employment issues.

**Eastbourne Core Strategy Policy**

Eastbourne Core Strategy Local Plan 2006-2027

B1 Spatial Development Strategy and Distribution

B2 Creating Sustainable Development Sustainable Neighbourhood

C1 Town Centre Neighbourhood Policy

D1 Sustainable Development

D5 Housing

D8 Travel Demands

D10 Historic Environment Building

D10A Design

LCF21 Retention of Community Facilities

**Borough Plan Policies**

Eastbourne Borough Plan 2001-2011

UHT 2 Height of Buildings

UHT 4 Visual Amenity

UHT17 Listed buildings

UHT 19 Retention of Historic Buildings

HO2 Predominantly Residential Areas

HO18 Accessible Housing

NE14 Source Protection Zone

TR11 Car Parking

TR12 Parking for those with mobility issues

**Site Description:**

Central Methodist Church is a GradeII listed building (1997) located within Eastbourne Town Centre.

The entire site relates to a rectangular plot in the town centre at the junction of Langney, Susans and Pevensey Road. The plot has two distinct elements; the main worship/congregation space is located facing Pevensey Road, with the rear element (former Hall and Sunday School building) providing a smaller congregation space/multi-function space and a number of ancillary/support accommodation accessed from Susans Road and Langney Road.

The application plot relates to the redevelopment of the former hall and Sunday School building (rear part) into residential with the main congregation space remaining unaltered.

**Relevant Planning History:**

EB/1980/0693  
 REPLACENT ROOF  
 Approved Unconditional  
 1981-01-27

EB/1976/0249  
 FOOTWAY CROSSING TO CAR STANDING  
 Approved Unconditional  
 1976-07-13

960027  
 Wheelchair access ramp.  
 Planning Permission  
 Approved unconditionally  
 13/02/1997

960069  
 New entrance door to existing terrace and wrought iron balustrading around forecourt.  
 Planning Permission  
 Approved conditionally  
 13/05/1996

**Proposed development:**

Planning and listed building consent is sought to convert the rear part of the building (halls and Sunday School) into residential accommodation (10 apartments) which uses the existing fenestration pattern and does not affect the external fabric of the building.

Accommodation schedule:-

Flat No /Type	Proposed size	National Space Standard
No1 (1 bed 2 person)	<b>60sqm</b>	50sqm
No 2 (1bed 2 person)	<b>70sqm</b>	50sqm
No 3 (1bed 2 person)	<b>72sqm</b>	50sqm
No 4 (1bed 2 person)	<b>77sqm</b>	50sqm
No 05 (1bed 2 person)	70sqm	50sqm
No 06 (2bed 4 person)	81sqm	70sqm
No 07 (1bed 2 person)	52sqm	50sqm
No 08 (1bed 2 person)	82sqm	50sqm
No 09 (1bed 2 person)	53sqm	50sqm
No 10 (1bed 2 person)	56sqm	50sqm

The proposed conversion is facilitated by the insertion of a mezzanine floor to the main hall (flats 7&8), new partition walls, the insertion of a passenger lift to all floors and the utilisation of existing window openings.

It is recognised that the widows within this element of the scheme are beyond economical/salvageable repair and thereby it is proposed that all windows will be replaced with metal 'Crittall Style' painted galvanised steel double glazed units with leaded lights to match the existing profiles. In addition 5 'conservation style' roof lights are proposed to provide illumination to apartments 9&10.

Where they exist original timber skirting/doors and architrave will be retained and where new is proposed they will match existing features.

The application does not propose any changes to the existing foul and surface water disposal arrangements at the site.

The application is supported by a number of information/reports; these are summarised below:-

**Transport Assessment:** *lawful use as a church had a parking demand which has is absorbed within the local highway network. The proposed development of 10 flats is likely to be attractive to those who chose to live/work in a town centre location and as such the impacts upon the local highway network directly from this scheme is neutral.*

**Quinquennial Inspection Report:** *This report outlines that in general terms to the building appears to be sound but it does identify a schedule of necessary repairs/maintenance. The main areas of work relate to spalling stonework, roofing issues and the cast iron within the leaded lights. This work considered necessary to maintain the building fit for public use was assessed in 2012 as being around £250k. This figure will be greater in 2017 and there is likely to be the added burden of works to an out of date heating and electrical supply. The accumulation of these factors places the repair bill beyond what is considered to be an acceptable/sustainable level for the existing congregation and as such is deemed to be beyond economical repair*

**Historical Building Assessment:** *This report concludes that the remodelling of the now unsustainable aspects of the site will not cause substantial harm to the significance of the Grade II listed building. However the original layout of the ground floor will be altered in the region of the hall and adjacent rooms, resulting in the loss of the historic plan and the potential historic fabrics. Given this it is recommended that a programme of building recording is controlled via planning condition.*

**Design and Access Statement:** *Reaffirms the results from the Quinquennial report in that the building is beyond sustainable economic repair and that the building is uninsurable for/as a public building going forward. The congregation are keen to ensure that the development on this site maximises the return such that it would assist in the delivery of their new combined church in Upperton Road*

*The key/ main congregation building does not form part of this proposal and is to be retained. In addition all of the key features are to be retained within this sympathetic conversion of the halls and Sunday School part of the building.*

*The D&A also recognises the wider benefits that this scheme brings to the town in that the four churches combining to form the new Emmanuel Congregation and Community Project are providing a new facility which will be available for the whole community to use fully funded by the net redevelopment proceeds and supplemented by substantial donations. Not only will the new church be an enhancement to Eastbourne, it will release much needed residential development on the three redundant church sites, two of which are in the Town centre and all are considered to be brownfield sites and thereby safeguarding/mitigating the needs for greenfield land.*

**Affordable Housing:** *This statement outlines that the applicants will honour their affordable housing requirements for this scheme. Given the issues with pepper potting throughout the development it is acknowledged that it is likely to result in an S106 to cover off site delivery.*

## **Consultations:**

### Internal:

Conservation Advisory Committee:- No objections raised no objections to the proposal in principle and felt it would preserve the character and appearance of the building and conservation area.

Specialist Advisor (Planning Policy) – Support the principle of residential dwellings at the site. Residential dwellings are in high demand in the Town Centre and this site was previously identified as having potential in the SHLAA process to accommodate 11 dwellings. Type and size of the accommodation is suitable for the Town Centre neighbourhood, based on the requirements of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment

Specialist Advisor (Conservation) No objection. Supporting commentary reported below:  
*...Adaptation of former faith buildings for accommodation has an extended history, and it is clear that, with care and attention, they can generate attractive and characterful living spaces able to benefit from the generous proportions and distinctive fenestration that are some of their key characteristics. Conversely, there are numerous examples of church conversions that struggle to harness that potential, remove and / or degrade features in pursuit of housing volume, and succumb to challenges around the detail of their sub-division, most notably around floor levels that sit uneasily with distinctive fenestration, poor flow and unattractive communal areas.*

*This proposal inclines to the virtuous end of the spectrum, evidencing both sensitivity to place and a light-touch that actively works with the contours of the building to limit any unnecessary disruption to historic fabric. Helpfully, the configuration of the building lends itself to relatively easy sub-division, with major structural modification centred on the repurposing of the soaring double height hall*

*for the two levels of apartment required, and with a preference to retain the building's plain yet impactful detailing wherever possible...*

*...Moreover, the design actively deploys inherited features, notably the imposing central stairwell, with its attractive ironwork detailing, and the distinctive wood-lined ceiling as unique and compelling partners in the development, acknowledging the building's past use and allowing for a continuing narrative across its changed function. Helpfully, earlier thoughts about removing stained glass windows to allow for the installation of more utilitarian Crittall fittings have been discarded and existing fenestration, which is generously proportioned and allows adequate light flow, will be retained.*

*Overall, my sense is that this is a carefully considered and sensitive application that has no impact at external level, uses the footprint and potential of the building to good effect whilst high profiling the small number of understated yet appealing features to positive effect. ...On the basis of the above, I am happy to support the application...*

External:

Southern Water – Requires their consent prior to any connection is made to the sewerage network.

Historic England – Do not wish to make any comments and are happy to rely on the advice of EBC's conservation officer.

Eastbourne Society – No comments received

Highways ESCC – No comments received ( at the time of drafting this report)

ESCC SUDS – This application relates to the internal alteration of an existing building and the external drainage arrangement is left intact and as such no objections are made.  
– *Advisory comment any access/ramps into the building should be designed in a way that stops water runoff from Langney Road and Pevensy Road from entering the building.*

Neighbour Representations:

No objections have been received

**Appraisal:**

Principle of development:

The application relates to a brownfield site in a sustainable location within Eastbourne Town Centre which has been identified as being suitable for residential redevelopment within its Strategic Land Availability Assessment.

The scheme supports the retention/relocation of community facilities on an allied site (United Reform Church Upperton Road), it is considered that there is no objection in principle to the loss of community facility nor for it to be replaced by residential apartments.

It is acknowledged that the high-status elements of this listed building namely the main church congregation building falls outside of this application and as such remains intact.

Impact of proposed development on amenity site and surrounding area:

The scheme is essentially reconfiguration of the internal fabric of the building to create self contained flats and as such when compared to the lawful use of this element of the building the use for residential purposes should create less activity (comings and goings) and in this regard is considered an acceptable form of development.

A new element would be the creation of refuse and recycling facilities to support the residential conversion; it is accepted that the application does not currently propose a solution however officers are satisfied that there is sufficient capacity at the site (external spaces and basement) for this issue to be resolved via planning condition.

The proposed roof lights are conservation style and as such are low profile and will not impact upon the existing roof profile of the building.

It is accepted that the development of apartments on this site will create habitable rooms and living spaces where none formerly existed and in some parts these are in elevated positions. However given this brownfield site is located within Eastbourne Town Centre, with the surrounding properties/plots primarily in commercial use it is considered that the degree of separation between this development and the occupiers of nearby properties is deemed acceptable in order to provide sufficient mitigation to issues of overlooking.

It is acknowledged that the proposal has the full support of the Conservation Area Advisory Group and the Council's conservation officer and in addition solicited a no objection response from Historic England these responses are testament to the fact that this is deemed to be a sympathetic conversion of this building that is respectful to its historic fabric and in this regard there are no objections to the listed building elements of this scheme.

#### Design issues:

The scheme has been designed around utilizing the existing window openings to the building and where new works are proposed these will reflect the character, form and appearance of the existing features that are retained with the building. Given this, it is considered that the proposed alterations would have little impact upon the external appearance of the host building in particular and the surrounding area in general and as such the development is considered to be acceptable.

It is accepted some of the apartments are better served by natural light than others; this is in part due to the desire to use existing window openings. Notwithstanding this the majority of the apartments have habitable rooms that are served via an external window that looks out either onto the street or over/into the internal courtyard. It is considered that this arrangement provides sufficient daylight/ventilation to the new apartments and as such in this regard it is considered to provide a quality form of living environment for the future occupiers of this block.

All floors and thereby all apartments are served by passenger lifts; this does result in this development being accessible to all sectors of the community. In addition door entry system will also help to increase site security for residents.

The internal layout has been designed so that similar uses/activities (bathrooms/bedrooms/kitchens) as much as is practicable to do so are stacked over each

other and thereby attempting to reduce the noise impacts from apartment to apartment. This is considered to add to the quality of the living environment for the future occupiers of this block.

Impacts on trees:

There are no trees on the site and therefore none impacted by this development. There is the potential to increase the biodiversity of the site with sensitive planting within the central landscape courtyard/amenity area.

Impacts on highway network or access:

In isolation it is clear that the scheme does not deliver the minimum off-street car parking spaces required by the number of apartments proposed. However this position is balanced by comparing the lawful use of the site as a community building that operated without off-street spaces (for its congregation) since it opened and added to its town centre location in close proximity to goods/services and public transport links.

Given that the buildings' site coverage is virtually 100% for this part of the site there is no potential to provide off street parking without demolition of significant elements of this listed building. It is considered that the retention of the historic fabric of the building is an overwhelming material consideration in this application and as such this proposal has been assessed as a car free development. As outlined in the preceding paragraph this is considered acceptable.

Sustainable development implications:

It is accepted that this development promotes the conversion of an existing building and that this building is listed; this will have impacts upon the potential thermal efficiency of the building. Notwithstanding this the applicant are committed to use their best endeavours to implement as many sustainable elements in the build/conversion as is possible.

As much as is practicable the scheme would therefore ensure that the new apartments would be built to high thermal efficiency standards and thereby reducing/mitigating energy consumption. In addition by limiting the number of parking spaces at the site it may also encourage the use of other forms of transport that would support wider sustainable principles.

Other matters:

It is recognised that support for this scheme will in part support the wider community initiative of the delivery of the Upperton Road United Reform Church. Members will note that the principle of the Upperton Road United Reform Church has been accepted and its delivery in terms of support the amalgamation of four of Eastbourne congregations into one central hub is considered to be a material consideration that should be given significant weight in the assessment of this proposal.

**Human Rights Implications:**

The impacts of the proposal have been assessed as part of the application process. Consultation with the community has been undertaken and the impact on local people is set out above. The human rights considerations have been taken into account fully in

balancing the planning issues; and furthermore the proposals will not result in any breach of the Equalities Act 2010.

**Conclusion:**

This scheme promotes a sustainable form of development in a highly sustainable location and as such is considered to accord with the National advice and also adopted local Plan Policies.

In addition it is acknowledged that the following key themes can be drawn in conclusion from the proposal:

- the scheme in isolation does not comply with the adopted parking standards however it is clear therefore that a judgement needs to be made as to where the overriding material consideration falls in the case. Officers have concluded that the impacts upon the local highway network are at worst neutral in comparison to the site lawful use. Given this brownfield town centre location a refusal based solely on the lack of car parking could not be substantiated.
- The existing church building is unsustainable by the present congregation in terms of its maintenance and repair regime and will be vacated in the near future following.
- That support for this scheme would support in part the wider Emanuel Church's ambition to realise a new community church on Upperton Road.
- Much needed town centre accommodation will be released by a sympathetic residential development which will include a contribution to affordable housing
- A comprehensive repair and restoration scheme to the retained facades will ensure the important features will not be lost.
- Replacement metal windows will be used; these are designed to replicate those used within the existing building and as such in terms of external impacts there is little impact to the host property in particular and the wider area in general.

**Recommendation:**

No1) 170036 Grant planning permission subject to the S106 covering local employment initiatives and affordable housing and subject to conditions

Conditions:

1 Time Limit

2 Approved Drawings

3 Schedule/specification of external repairs

4 Demolition and construction method statement outlining:

- Building/window recording prior to demolition
- how salvaged materials will be removed/stored and reused
- Hours of operation
- Site storage and welfare facilities
- Routes for demolition and construction vehicles
- Parking regimes for construction workers vehicles

5 cycle parking provided and made available before use commences

6 Refuse/recycling before the uses commences

No2 170033 Grant Listed Building Consent subject to the following conditions

1 Time Limit

2 Approved Drawings

3 Schedule/specification of external repairs

4 Demolition and construction method statement outlining:

- Building/window recording prior to demolition
- how salvaged materials will be removed/stored and reused
- Hours of operation
- Site storage and welfare facilities
- Routes for demolition and construction vehicles
- Parking regimes for construction workers vehicles

5 cycle parking provided and made available before use commences

6 Refuse/recycling before the uses commences

Appeal:

Should the applicant appeal the decision the appropriate course of action to be followed, taking into account the criteria set by the Planning Inspectorate, is considered to be written representations.