

App.No: 170156 (PPP)	Decision Due Date: 12 May 2017	Ward: Meads
Officer: Neil Holdsworth	Site visit date:	Type: Planning Permission
Site Notice(s) Expiry date: 10 March 2017		
Neighbour Con Expiry: 10 March 2017		
Press Notice(s): Published 20 February 2017		
Over 8/13 week reason: reported to committee out of time given committee cycle and requests for further drawings/information		
Location: St Andrews United Reformed Church, Cornfield Lane, Eastbourne		
Proposal: Demolition of St Andrews Church and Albury House behind retained facade to Blackwater Road. Construction of 3-4 Storey building comprising 36 residential units and 11 parking spaces accessed from Wish Road and Cornfield Lane		
Applicant: Rev David Yule		
Recommendation: Approve subject to Conditions and S106 covering affordable housing and local employment issues.		

Executive Summary:

Members will recall that the Emanuel Churches of Eastbourne are coming together to form a common congregation and that this congregation would 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 the 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 vacated sites and 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, scale, mass and design of new building are such that the development is considered to be acceptable in broad townscape 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.

Planning Status:

St Andrews Church is a vacant locally listed building located within an area of high townscape value in Eastbourne Town Centre.

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 of Local Interest

D10 Historic Environment Area of High Townscape Value

D10A Design

LCF21 Retention of Community Facilities

Borough Plan Policies

Eastbourne Borough Plan 2001-2011

UHT 2 Height of Buildings

UHT 4 Visual Amenity

UHT16 Area of High Townscape Value

UHT18 Buildings of Local Interest

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:

The application site relates to a now vacant church building (Gothic Style 1878) with ancillary mid-20th Century buildings, these are located on a corner plot at the junction of Blackwater Road, Cornfield Lane and Wish Road. It is acknowledged that in hierarchy terms Blackwater Road is the principle highway with Wish Road and Cornfield Lane being principally service roads that provide rear access to residential units and also commercial businesses.

The existing accommodation covers virtually the whole of the application plot and in broad terms there are no significant changes of level across the site.

The site is located outside but adjacent to the boundary with the Town Centre and Seafront Conservation Area.

Relevant Planning History:

St Andrews Church was designed by F.J. Baker in 1878, as a Presbyterian place of worship to serve the Lower Meads community. The church was built over a 20 year period and extended to the south to incorporate accommodation for the church warden. Albury House is a more recent addition and is currently used in part by Eastbourne Food Bank.

The building was deemed by Historic England as not of nationally noteworthy quality for it to be Statutory Listed, notwithstanding this the building has been identified as having some merits and appears on Eastbourne's Local List of Heritage assets.

The applicant has supplied evidence outlining the repair works required within their 5 year maintenance programme. This evidence confirmed that the building was beyond economical repair/maintenance such that the building (for public use) is uninsurable, hence the building is now vacant with the congregation have relocated.

Proposed development:

Application proposes the façade retention of the key elevations of the existing church building facing Blackwater Road and Wish Road. All other parts of the Church and ancillary buildings are to be demolished to be replaced with a new building comprising 36 flats (27 X 1 bedroom flats and 9 X 2 bedroom flats), the full mix of the units and its relationship to the National Space Standards is outlined below.

The development has a broadly 'J' shaped footprint with:-

- 7 flats, 10 spaces and central courtyard on the ground floor
- 11 flats on the first floor
- 11 flats on the second floor
- 7 flats on the third floor (within roof space)

There are three pedestrian access points to the development two to/from Cornfield Lane and the other from Wish Road, all flats within the development will have access to a lift.

The scheme proposes 10 car parking spaces including 1 disabled space, these car parking spaces are located within two blocks, 6 spaces accessed via Cornfield Lane and 4 spaces accessed off Wish Road. Within these car parking areas there is also accommodation for cycle and refuse stores. These car parking areas will include horizontal sliding doors, this would provide defensible space for the car park holders and also reduce the impacts of anti-social behaviour that can often be associated with undercroft parking areas.

A central landscaped amenity area is also proposed, this provides circulation to and around all elements of the scheme as well as providing the potential for some soft landscaping.

Flat No/Type/location	Proposed Space	National Space Standards
GROUND FLOOR		
10 Car Parking Spaces		

Central Courtyard Garden		
1 X 2 Bed-3 Person	63	61
2 X 1 Bed-2 Person	55	50
3 X 1 Bed-2 Person	63	50
4 X 1 Bed-2 Person	87	50
5 X 2 Bed-3 Person	70	61
6 X 2 Bed-3 Person	88	61
7 X 1 Bed-2 Person	72	50
FIRST FLOOR		
8 X 2 Bed-3 Person	64	61
9 X 1 Bed-2 Person	55	50
10 X 1 Bed-2 Person	58	50
11 X 1 Bed-2 Person	58	50
12 X 1 Bed-2 Person	65	50
13 X 1 Bed-2 Person	87	50
14 X 2 Bed-3 Person	69	61
15 X 2 Bed-3 Person	70	61
16 X 1 Bed-2 Person	71	50
17 X 1 Bed-2 Person	50	50
18 X 1 Bed-2 Person	53	50
SECOND FLOR		
19 X 2 Bed-3 Person	63	61
20 X 1 Bed-2 Person	57	50
21 X 1 Bed-2 Person	60	50
22 X 1 Bed-2 Person	60	50
23 X 1 Bed-2 Person	65	50
24 X 1 Bed-2 Person	87	50
25 X 2 Bed-3 Person	72	61
26 X 2 Bed-3 Person	69	61
27 X 1 Bed-2 Person	71	50
28 X 1 Bed-2 Person	51	50
29 X 1 Bed-2 Person	53	50
THIRD FLOOR		
30 X 1 Bed-2 Person	57	50
31 X 1 Bed-2 Person	51	50
32 X 1 Bed-2 Person	60	50
33 X 1 Bed-2 Person	54	50
34 X 1 Bed-2 Person	54	50
35 X 1 Bed-2 Person	62	50
36 X 1 Bed-2 Person	60	50

The application is supported by a number of supporting 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 36 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.*

The parking spaces provided by this scheme are of a size suitable for disabled drivers.

Both of the town centre churches forming the wider congregation (combined Emanuel churches) do not have any off street car parking for parishioners so in a wider town centre context the redevelopment of the Upperton United Reform Church with an element of off-street parking is considered to be an enhancement.

A parking capacity survey has been undertaken and this has concluded that there is sufficient capacity in the wider network to accommodate surplus parking and that this is mitigated by the sites proximity to town centre and thereby its accessibility to other services and public transport links.

Services Assessment Report: *the new building will be designed to 'Lifestyle Home' standards; incorporate sustainable drainage attenuation measures within the central courtyard/amenity area and the potential grey water harvesting will be explored at the detailed design stage.*

Historical Building Assessment: *This report concludes that from the perspective of the built heritage, it is considered that the proposed scheme will secure the significant elements of the heritage asset. It is considered that the archaeological potential of the site is low given the post medieval development on/near to the site.*

Historical Environment Report: *Since the last Quinquennial inspection was carried out an inspection has been made which has identified substantial problems with the existing installation requiring significant expenditure to rectify in order to obtain insurance cover for a public building. This and other structural/building fabric repair issues has led to the conclusion that the building is not fit for purpose and that any redevelopment should be respectful to the historic environment.*

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. 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 features/assets from within the existing building (stained glass windows, pews, organ, slates) will be salvaged and reused. The scheme seeks to retain the two key facades onto Blackwater Road and also Wish Road; in addition other key roofline features will be salvaged and or rebuilt/reused at the site.

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. The redevelopment will also make full use of the latest Green technology.

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 the it is likely to result in an S106 to cover off site delivery.*

Consultations:

Internal:

Conservation Area Advisory Group: The Group applauded the proposal's intention to retain the facade of the local landmark building. The demolition of Albury House was considered acceptable in the circumstances given that the facade of the church would be retained. The Group supported the principle of the proposal's modern contemporary design and considered that in terms of conservation design it would form a good relationship with the surrounding conservation area.

Specialist Advisor (Economic Development) – S106 agreement to cover local labour agreement

Specialist Advisor (Planning Policy) – Support in principle, would deliver housing in a sustainable location, site has been identified in the SHLAA, would comply with the Meads Policy C11 of the core strategy by providing new housing through redevelopment and conversions in a mix of type and style, including affordable housing, within the existing urban area.

Specialist Advisor (Conservation) No objections to the proposal, key themes from response contained below

This applicant seeks permission to demolish the bulk of a well-established town centre worship centre and neighbouring building currently used for community purposes in order to create a significant apartment complex at the heart of the Town Centre. In total, the development site comprises a C19th church, associated halls dating back to the early C20th and a further mid C20th building. Unsurprisingly, the proposition has generated substantial interest, reflecting its high profile location, concern at the loss of (most of) a local landmark and a complex of detail issues related to apartment volume on site, access and parking. This consultation is necessarily limited in its scope, and can only consider issues relating to conservation and the site's heritage status, including attempts to fuse elements of the retained façade with new build in a residential campus context.

For context, it is worth noting that the project site does not form part of any Historic England national listing, though it is locally listed, and it sits outside the boundary of a Conservation area, although it is proximate to one. It also sits immediately behind Cornfield Terrace, which is group listed. An attempt was made to secure national listing, though this was unsuccessful, generating a response from Historic England that acknowledged its "pleasing" status whilst deeming it

"architecturally undistinguished." The main features identified as of note in this assessment were the building's stained glass windows, to include pieces designed by Morris and Co and M C Farrar Bell, and it is heartening to discover that these will be removed and retained for use in the new combined Emmanuel Church that will house worshippers from St Andrews, and other sites across the borough, thereby safeguarding the building's most prized heritage assets for re-installation in a new setting.

In process terms, the item was presented to the borough's Conservation Area Advisory Group on 4 April 2017, where it was commended by members. The Eastbourne Society planning advisor, in his written submission to CAAG, also applauded the application.

I share this positive reading of the development proposal and want to start my consultation by noting the widespread affection for a visible and popular building that has featured in so many local journeys through the town centre for over a century, effectively becoming a landmark local feature that is a treasured part of our collective municipal memory. This is reflected in its local listing. The retention of major elevations is a defining and highly commendable feature of the application, allowing for a new lease of life and continuing physical presence for some of the most visible parts of the existing building on the radically reconfigured site, effectively providing a bridge from an extended past, and a connector to, the unashamedly contemporary housing development at its rear. The remainder of the existing building will be demolished but materials from it, most notably slates, brick and stone work, will also be removed and re-used to support the renovation of the retained facades, further reinforcing the concept of fusion between old and new. Specific areas of heritage upgrade and advantage include the restoration of the fleche, the rebuilding of turrets and renovations to the stone tracery.

By contrast, the new-build element resists the temptation for a redbrick pastiche and instead opts for a strikingly contemporary design, whilst respecting the broad form and height of predecessor buildings. Overall, I think this works well, generating colour, texture and playfulness through the inventive use of colour panels, to derive a vibrant town centre aesthetic that takes inspiration from a vibrant and eclectic immediate location; one that successfully accommodates a diverse mix of retail, hospitality, commercial and residential uses. More specific feedback about enhancing the impact of entrance areas has been provided in face-to-face meetings with the applicants.

In my professional opinion, the application offers a pragmatic solution to changing times for a traditional faith institution, conserving key elements, including its most important facades, as an integral and embedded element of an exciting new complex that is heavily influenced by the site's history, context and surroundings. On this basis, I am happy to support the application.

Specialist Advisor (Waste) It is recommended that space is provided for 8 X 1280ltr bulk bins (4 refuse and 4 recycling). These bins should be located as close to the highway as possible.

External:

Environment Agency -

County Archaeologist – Conditional support of the scheme

Highways ESCC- require further design details to be clarified

SUDS – Required clarification on design issues to manage surface water runoff

Eastbourne Society – No comment directly received however they commented when the case was reported to Conservation Area Advisory Committee; this is reported in the Conservation Officers response (above).

Neighbour Representations:

20 Objections have been received and cover in the main the following points:

Noise and disturbance

The quietness of the area will be disturbed

Surrounded by narrow roads, may lead to highway issues

Need a method statement to ensure the highways network will not be impacted

Insufficient parking

Rain and waste water needs to be adequately dealt with

Existing business in the area, these should not be impacted by the development

New residents may complain about long standing existing businesses

Loss of an important local building is very regrettable

Loss of view would be harmful

Loss of light

Extra traffic generation

There is significant ASB in the area

Would it not be better to knock it down and start again?

No pavements in the area, pedestrian safety

Area overrun by cars

Development should be two beds to fit into the area

Lack of mix of properties through the scheme

Whole building should be converted

Overdeveloped

Lack of street lighting

Party walls around the site need to be retained

Overlooking potentially from the site

Is the stained glass window being retained?

Covered parking areas may increase ASB and litter issues

Flat roof may assist in access/trespass issues

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.

Impact of proposed development on amenity of adjoining occupiers and surrounding area:

The scheme has been designed to retain the important key facades/elements of the existing building and that the new build elements will fall within the existing silhouette of the existing main church building (as it abuts Blackwater Road, Wish Road and Cornfield Lane).

In addition as the new build element runs along Wish Road and Cornfield Lane it is acknowledged that the size and scale diminishes to a level that is more respectful to the scale of the buildings that form these streets. Given this the development should not give rise to any material increase in dominance nor result in any significant loss of light to the occupiers of the adjacent properties.

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 browfield site is located within Eastbourne Town Centre it is considered that the degree of separation between this development the occupiers of nearby residential properties is deemed acceptable and the scheme has been designed (with its window arrangement) to mitigate the overlooking that might ensue.

Design issues:

The building/scheme has been designed to attain BREEAM level 4, Lifestyle Homes standards and also flat sizes in excess of those recommended in the National Guidance.

It is accepted that majority of the apartments are single aspect however all habitable rooms are served via an external window that looks out either onto the street or over/into the internal courtyard amenity space. 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.

The internal courtyard/amenity space provides not only circulation around the development but also a private and secure landscaped area which is considered to be added value to the future residents of the scheme, especially given this town centre location. In addition this central courtyard area provides/enables the potential for an element of sustainable drainage to be implemented at the site.

The precise details of this sustainable drainage will be controlled via planning condition however it is clear that to increase the degree/amount of permeable surfaces at the site and the inclusion of storage tanks would help to stem the run off rates of surface water and thereby make a positive enhancement to mitigating localised flooding.

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) 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.

Impact on character and setting of site and the surrounding area

It is accepted that the existing church building commands a prominent position within the street and the principle elevations command significant heritage value. However Heritage England in 1978 declined to Statutory List the building quoting:

...St Andrews United Reform Church, built in 1878 to the design of FJ Barker and extended in the early 20th Century is a pleasing but architecturally undistinguished late 19th Century red brick gothic revival church. Although it has some fittings of interest, including stained glass by Morris and Co, the interior is not of particular merit. While the church has townscape value and local historic interest, in the national context it lacks the special interest to warrant inclusion in the Statutory List...

Notwithstanding this the building has been placed on the Councils Local List of Heritage Buildings as recognition of its heritage asset value and the importance it visually makes to this street in particular and the wider street scene in general. The applicants have acknowledged this and are proposing the retention of two key façades (façade retention on Blackwater Road and Wish Road). It is considered that the façade retention and that the proposed new-build element is limited to the height of the existing silhouette help to mitigate the visual impacts of the development in the street scene.

In townscape terms and impact upon the character and appearance of this site and the wider area is deemed acceptable.

The new build element is separated from the heritage element by a simple link brick and glass element; these form the main stairway cores but also provide a visual transition between the old and the new. The elevations to the new build element utilize brick and render cladding, projecting windows under a standing seam metal faux pitched roof. It is considered that the design and appearance of the new build element is of sufficient quality to be respectful to but not compete with the main retained heritage element of the scheme.

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:

A number of third party representations received highlight the lack of parking at the site as an overriding issue for them and that any displaced parking would have a significant impact upon the available on-street parking in the locality and may give rise to indiscriminate on street parking causing highway safety issues as well potentially impacting on local businesses.

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 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 the awkward layout/footprint of the applicaton site it is considered that the delivery of more spaces could not be accomodated without compromising the quality of the scheme. Further car parking spaces could be provided but this would be at the expense of the number of proposed flats, the loss of the internal amenity space, loss of the key facades as well as increasing signiicantly to the overall building costs which may impact the viability of the scheme.

Sustainable development implications:

The development has been designed to achieve BREAM level 4 and Lifetime homes standards as well as other sustainable initiatives like sustainable drainage and grey water harvesting. This scheme would therefore ensure that the new building would be built to high thermal efficiency standards and thereby reducing/mitigating the 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 delivey in terms of support the amalgamation of four of Eastbourne congregations into one central hub is considerd 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 additon 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 made as to where the overriding material consideration falls in the case. Offciers have conculded that the impacts upon the local highway network are at worst neutral in comparison to the site lawful use. Given this bronfield 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 has had to be vacated owing to the lack of insurance cover, which is unobtainable in its present condition.
- 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
- The profile and the existing key features of the existing church building has been used to limit the scale of the new development and thereby mitigating the impacts into the street scene. In addition existing slates will be salvaged and reused.
- A comprehensive repair and restoration scheme to the retained facades will ensure the important features will not be lost.
- Existing stained glass will be removed and re-used in the Upperton Road United Reform Church.

Recommendation:

Grant Planning Permission subject to S106 to cover local employment initiatives and affordable housing delivery.

Conditions:

1 Time Limit

2 Approved Drawings

3 External Materials

4 Hard and soft landscaping

5 Demolition and construction method statement outlining:

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

6 SUDS

7 parking to be provided and made available before use commences

8 cycle parking provided and made available before use commences

9 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.