

App.No: 130515 (PPP)	Decision Due Date: 18 November 2013	Ward: Hampden Park
Officer: Anna Clare	Site visit date: 11 September 2013	Type: Planning Permission
Site Notice(s) Expiry date: 13 September 2013 Neigh. Con Expiry: 13 September 2013 Weekly list Expiry: 29 August 2013 Press Notice(s):		
Over 8/13 week reason: Brought to Planning Committee within Statutory Time Frame.		
Location: Gateway Christian Church, Frenchgate Road, Eastbourne		
Proposal: Demolition of existing buildings, removal of temporary buildings and sheds and the erection of a new church and community centre, including external works.		
Applicant: Mr Clive Harrison		
Recommendation: Grant planning permission subject to conditions.		

Executive Summary:

The proposal represents a sustainable form of development as it provides purpose built accommodation to meet the needs of the church and will also provide enhanced facilities for community uses.

The proposal is a modern design which will have no detrimental impact on the visual amenities of the locality or significant impact on surrounding residential properties and will result in improvements to the appearance of the site.

The proposals are acceptable in terms of their impact on the highway network.

Relevant Planning Policies:

Eastbourne Core Strategy Policies:

- B2 Creating Sustainable Neighbourhoods
- C7 Hampden Park Neighbourhood Policy
- D1 Sustainable Development
- D7 Community, Sport and Health
- D8 Sustainable Travel
- D10A Design

Saved Borough Plan Policies

NE16: Development within 250 Metres of a Former Landfill Site

NE17: Contaminated Land

NE18: Noise

UHT1: Design of New Development

UHT2: Height of Buildings

UHT4: Visual Amenity

UHT7: Landscaping

HO2: Predominantly Residential Areas

HO7: Redevelopment

HO20: Residential Amenity

TR6: Facilities for Cyclists

TR11: Car Parking

TR12: Car Parking for Those with Mobility Problems

National Planning Policy Framework 2012

7. Requiring good design.

8. Promoting Healthy Communities.

Site Description:

The site is located on the corner of Frenchgate Road and Lottbridge Drive, in Hampden Park. The existing buildings on site are ad-hoc and consist of the original Frenchgate Chapel, a pair of semi-detached houses, a relatively new entrance linking the two together and a portable building and two sheds at the rear of the site.

The site has been a church for many years, with the original Frenchgate Chapel dating from around the 1930's. The surrounding area is residential, with predominantly two storey dwellings of varying designs. The site is situated within a sustainable location with Hampden Park train station nearby and a bus route running along Lottbridge Drive.

Relevant Planning History:

Planning permission was granted in 1999 (Ref: EB/1999/0217) for the redevelopment of the site, at this time the site did not include both of the semi-detached properties 66 and 68 Lottbridge Drive and therefore the proposed church was contained to the frenchgate street elevation, with off street parking to the front and rear of the site. This proposal included a two storey octagonal tower with No.66 Lottbridge Drive retaining the visual appearance externally however linked with the church internally.

This application lapsed, and a further application for a similar scheme with some minor alterations to the external appearance, was submitted and approved in 2004 (EB/2004/0564). However, this permission also lapsed in 2009.

Proposed development:

The proposed development consists of the demolition of all buildings on site; and the redevelopment of the site to provide a replacement purpose built church with

office, classroom and meeting room facilities with four parking spaces, plus one additional disabled parking space provided with access onto Frenchgate Road.

The proposal also includes a separate Police support office with its own external entrance, providing a permanent Police presence. The Church currently has a facility for the Police, which the Applicant confirms is used as a facility on a regular basis.

A large main entrance with multi-purpose foyer and reception room is proposed; the external area to the main entrance is proposed to be paved with some soft landscaping provided.

Consultations:

External Consultee Responses:

Sussex Police (6 September 2013)

Write in support of the application stating it is widely agreed that promoting a visible public presence on the part of the Police reduces fear of crime and feelings of insecurity. Reasons why the proposal will benefit the community;

- It will allow officers to have refreshment breaks in the community rather than returning to the main Police station.*
- Neighbourhood Officers would be able to hold appointments in the office rather than homes where residents may be frightened of reprisals from neighbours etc.*
- Police would be able to hold beat surgeries from the office, and crime prevention events directly in the neighbourhood.*
- It would encourage the public to interact with the neighbourhood officers in a neutral building.*

Neighbour Representations:

44 Responses have been received from interested residents, from the surrounding area and further across Eastbourne.

7 Objections have been received raising the following points;

- Increase in demand for parking
- With a capacity of 289 where will people park with only 5 spaces provided.
- Lottbridge Drive is a busy Road and Frenchgate Road is a narrow residential street, clear parking proposals will be needed to maintain the flow
- Design is not in keeping with the area.

Objections specifically to note from;

2 Kingston Road which shares the sites northern boundary have raised an objection on the grounds the view from their kitchen window and natural light will be blocked by the proposed development

22 Frenchgate Close which shares the eastern boundary with the site comments on the application and specifically states they would not want access to the plot via the private garage area which adjoins the site to the east.

Whilst 37 comments in support of the application were received stating the following reasons;

- For the common good and care in our community.
- The development will benefit people of all ages.
- The new building will enhance the local surroundings.
- Will rejuvenate an area of Eastbourne in a positive way.
- The new building will improve the site in appearance and facilities available.
- Modern development, not too tall, fills the site well.
- Greater capacity to continue and provide additional community activities.
- Will improve the visual appearance of the area.
- The site is well served by public transport.
- Ideal location, wide roads allowing parking on both sides whilst allowing traffic to flow.
- Positive visual impact.
- Could become a landmark building, something the community could be proud of.
- The existing buildings are run down, the plans look energising for the area.
- Tasteful modern design.
- The hours the property will be used fall within sociable hours.
- The building has been designed to take into account the issues of both noise and light.
- A new building will attract more people in the community.
- The new building will give the community a real 'lift' in having a purpose-built centre for them to use.
- The design uses the available space in the best possible way, maximising the internal space.
- The police presence in the building will be beneficial to the community and add to the safety of the neighbourhood.
- Parking is not currently an issue.
- Hopefully the development will prompt some well needed regeneration to this part of Eastbourne.

Applicant's Points

- The Gateway Christian Church was formed in 2011 by the amalgamation of two existing church fellowships – Frenchgate Christian Fellowship and Edmond Evangelical Church (Previously located in Old Town).
- To have a church wishing to invest in the community is rare and the building itself aims to reflect its use.
- The Gateway Christian Centre aims to provide an inclusive building, providing flexible accommodation that can be adapted as required to suit changing needs.

- The new Gateway Centre will provide a high quality facility within Hampden Park, offering excellent facilities not only for the church congregation, but also for the community around.
- As the site is surrounded by housing it is considered necessary to keep the new building as low as possible, in order to minimise any overshadowing of the neighbouring properties, especially those to the north.
- A variety of roof planes creates an undulating, interesting form, without being excessively tall and also helps to break up the massing of the building. The use of clerestory glazing not only allows the new centre to benefit from high levels of natural light, but it also gives the building a light appearance and suggests that the roof is floating above the accommodation provided.
- In addition to the usual church activities, such as Sunday worship, the Gateway Christian Church offers activities during the week which are available to the local community as well as the church congregation.
- The proposed new building is contained within the site, and a margin has been retained around to the building to allow access for cycle storage, maintenance, refuse and recycling bins and fire escape routes. This margin also respects the neighbouring properties.
- The tallest part of the roof is at the corner of the two roads, which helps to announce the building at the focal point of the site, within its urban context.
- The proposal is to make this building as sustainable as is possible within the budgetary constraints of the client. The building fabric and energy consuming systems will be designed to minimise the usage of energy and related carbon emissions in the most appropriate way possible.
- A green travel plan has been provided as part of the application; this states that the church has a membership which is evenly spread across all generations. This should be taken into consideration when evaluating transport preferences and options. The Gateway Christian Church is committed to providing alternative modes of transport wherever possible, encouraging those who are local to walk and those who live further away to use public transport.

Appraisal:

Principle of Development

The use of the church is existing on site; the buildings are currently very ad-hoc with a modern entrance linking a pair of semi detached previously residential properties and the old chapel. The proposal is to replace the existing buildings with one purpose built church building to improve the facilities available. The existing buildings are of little character and the re-development of the site would greatly improve the visual appearance of this site which is situated within a prominent location.

The planning system can provide an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities. The NPPF in paragraph 70 states that to deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities (including meeting spaces and places of worship and cultural buildings) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments; and ensure that facilities and services are able to develop and modernise in a way that is sustainable and retained for the benefit of the community.

There is no doubt that the replacement building will provide significantly better facilities which will be available to the local community which is in line with the vision of the NPPF. The building has been designed to be passively solar efficient, and to reduce the need for air handling units all the spaces are designed to be natural ventilated. The site is sustainable in terms of location and proximity to public transport reducing the need for the private car. Policy B2 of the Eastbourne Core Strategy states that the sustainability of the neighbourhoods will be improved by addressing the issues specific to the individual communities, and encouraging links between the neighbourhoods; proposals will be required to meet the needs of the local community, provide services and facilities locally within reasonable walking distance, whilst protecting the residential and environmental amenity of existing and future residents. Additionally, Policy C7 of the Eastbourne Core Strategy 2013 outlines the vision for the Hampden Park neighbourhood, which will be promoted by increasing provision for facilities for children and young people.

Transport and Parking Issues

The site has 4 officially laid out parking spaces existing on site, with hardstanding which could accommodate further off-street parking spaces although there is no official drop curb to access the full hardstanding.

The proposal allows for 4 off street parking spaces, maintaining the current amount, with one additional disabled space all with access onto Frenchgate Road. The Applicant's Green Travel Plan which has been submitted in support of the application states that typically attendances for the Sunday service (although held off site since the amalgamation of the two churches) is around 80 to 100 adults and 20 to 30 children slightly more than the 70 to 90 who attended the previous Frenchgate Church.

Whilst a number of objections have been received in relation to parking and traffic issues, it is not considered that a refusal based on impacts of parking could be substantiated given the proposed development maintains 4 off-street parking spaces. Undoubtedly the development will increase the number of visitors with improved facilities and therefore a greater number of services provided, however it is not considered the visitors would dramatically increase to cause significant impacts on parking in the surrounding area. The site is located within a sustainable location, with good public transport links; the proposal also includes the provision of secure cycle parking which will encourage cycling by visitors. Lottbridge Drive is a wide residential road whilst there are some properties with drop-curbs facilitating off street parking, there remains a significant amount of space for on street

parking of vehicles without hindering traffic flow or safety. Frenchgate Street is more narrow and is less suited for on-street parking without causing traffic flow issues. However, planning cannot control where visitors park.

Impacts on Amenity of Surrounding Residential Properties

The proposed new building is contained within the site and a margin has been retained around the building to allow access for cycle storage, maintenance, refuse and recycling bins and fire escape routes. This margin also respects the neighbouring properties, and the set back will minimise the impact of the proposed building on surrounding properties in terms of appearance, and impacts on over shadowing.

No.2 Kingston Road which is located adjacent the site to the north have objected to the proposals on the grounds of the impact on their property in terms of outlook and light. This property was granted planning permission for a two storey side extension in 2006. The plans of this indicate that the window to the side elevation which would be most affected by the proposal is a secondary kitchen window. The original kitchen window faces out over the rear garden. The second window at ground floor level appears to serve the garage. The proposed building is set back 2m from the boundary here with the neighbouring property and is proposed to be 5m in height. The height and set back from the boundary are considered to minimise the impact on the neighbouring property. It is not considered that the proposed building will have a significant impact on this property in terms of over bearing or loss of light or outlook to warrant a refusal of the application on this ground.

Another neighbouring property No.22 Frenchgate Close which shares a boundary with the site to the east, have objected to the application. The site is defined from this neighbouring properties garage area which will adjoin this boundary and it is not considered as such that the proposal will have a significant impact on this property.

Design

The proposed building is a modern design, with the external walls finished in brickwork and the roof a standing seam zinc roof, in part proposed to be coloured red which gives a more dramatic appearance of the roof planes facing onto Lottbridge Drive.

Given the corner location, the site is approached from several directions, therefore has more than one elevation of importance visually. The building has been designed to provide a focal point at the intersection of the two roads, which is appropriate for its proposed community uses.

Policy C7 of the Eastbourne Core Strategy states that the vision for Hampden Park will be promoted by improving the public realm in residential and shopping areas to create a sense of place. The Government through the NPPF places great importance on the design of the built environment; paragraph 56 of the NPPF states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively for making places better for people.

Policy D10A of the Eastbourne Core Strategy goes further to state that new development can be modern or based on historic forms but must respect, preserve or enhance local character. It is vital that design goes beyond the focus of the individual development and also takes account of sense of place, safety and security.

The design is proposed to be a landmark, visually drawing people to the site with the use of prominent design features and proposed red zinc roof to the auditorium. The surrounding area is residential, predominantly pairs of two storey semi-detached dwellings to Lottbridge Drive with brick ground floor and first floor render or cladding, and two storey terraced properties to Frenchgate Road with brick and tile cladding. The existing properties although fairly uniform are of no particular character. It is therefore considered that the design is appropriate to the setting, proposing a modern development a focal point within the residential area in line with national and local policy.

Flood Risk

The site is situated within a flood risk area, the proposal to re-develop the existing buildings on the site, given there is no additional hardstanding it is considered there are no additional risks in terms of flooding or surface water drainage issues.

Human Rights Implications:

It is considered that the proposed development would not affect the rights of occupiers of surrounding residential properties to the peaceful enjoyment of possessions and protection of property. Furthermore the proposals will not result in any breach of the Equalities Act 2010.

Conclusion:

Consideration has been given to the impacts on the surrounding neighbouring properties in terms of over bearing, and impacts on outlook and daylight however it was not considered that the proposed development would have significant impacts on the neighbouring occupiers to justify the refusal of the application.

Whilst undoubtedly the proposed building will provide significantly better facilities and enable more services to be run from the premises thereby increasing footfall or visitors by car, it is not considered that it is reasonable to assume the additional increase in visitors will result in significant impacts on the surrounding road network in traffic generation or demand for on-street parking. Cycling facilities will be provided which will encourage users to cycle to events; and the site is situated within a sustainable location with nearby train station and bus services.

The design of the proposal is considered to respect the character and appearance of the area, proposing a modern focal point design for the residential area. Given the above, the proposal is considered acceptable and in line with saved policies of the Borough Plan and policies of the Core Strategy and guidance set out by the National Planning Policy Framework.

Recommendation: Grant planning permission subject to conditions.

Conditions:

- (1) Time limit for commencement
- (2) In accordance with approved drawings
- (3) Submission of samples of materials
- (4) Submission of details of the cycle storage facilities
- (5) Vehicular access to be constructed prior to occupation
- (6) Layout of parking spaces prior to occupation of building
- (7) Protection of visibility splays
- (8) Details of boundary treatment
- (9) Standard demolition hours of work condition.

Informatives:

- (1) Pre-commencement conditions

Appeal: Should the applicant appeal the decision the appropriate followed, taking into account the criteria set by the Planning Inspectorate, is considered to be **written representations.**