

ITEM NO.

6

COMMITTEE DATE:

06/09/2010

APPLICATION NO:

10/0648/16

EXETER CITY COUNCIL REGULATION 3

APPLICANT:Ms E Osmundsen
Exeter City Council**PROPOSAL:**

Change of use from church to 9 flats and community facility, including alterations to roof to provide second floor accommodation and three storey extension on north east elevation, redevelopment of sports hall to provide two storey building comprising 4 flats, parking and associated works

LOCATION:

Whipton Methodist Church, Brookway, Exeter, EX1 3JJ

REGISTRATION DATE:

28/04/2010

EXPIRY DATE:

28/07/2010



Scale 1:1250

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HISTORY OF SITE

90/00874/03 - Erection of garage/store
92/0821/03 - Roof extension

PER 07/12/1990
PER 02/12/1992

DESCRIPTION OF SITE/PROPOSAL

The site currently comprises a disused 1950s Methodist Church and Community Centre, including a sports hall to the rear of the site. It is set in an area characterised by 2/3 storey residential buildings. It is bordered by a stream to the east side, and the land falls off steeply to the stream, which is surrounded by dense foliage. The street boundary, to the west, is formed by railings on a low brick wall with a gated vehicle entrance to the south, and a gated pedestrian entrance to the centre of the frontage. There is a single garage located adjacent

to the sports hall and the remainder of the rear area is dedicated to parking. There are a number of mature trees within the site.

The building was originally constructed with a flat roof and a pitched roof was subsequently added in the early 1990s.

It is proposed to extend the existing church building and to create two floor levels within it. It is also proposed to replace the pitched roof with an additional flat-roofed storey. This would create a total of eight flats. One of these would be a mobility unit; the rest would be for over-55s.

The building would be faced with render, brick slips to match the existing brickwork and glass cladding panels, with a metal roof.

A room for use by the local community is proposed within the building.

All buildings and structures in the site other than the main church building are to be demolished. It is proposed to construct a new building in the approximate location of the existing sports hall comprising two 2-bedroom mobility flats and two 2-bedroom flats for over 55s above. This building would be faced with a mixture of render and timber cladding with a standing seam metal roof. The ground floor units would each have an attached carport structure.

Parking provision for 10 cars is provided at the rear of the site.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY THE APPLICANT

- Planning Statement
- Design and Access Statement
- Geotechnical and Geo-environmental assessment
- Report on structural condition
- Ecology report
- Tree Survey

REPRESENTATIONS

Objections: 2. Principal planning issues raised:

- Increased pressure on on-street parking
- Difficulty of manoeuvring vehicles into the site due to on-street parking.

A further letter has been received from the occupant of 28 Brookway indicating that she would be happy for the trees on her boundary adjoining the site to be removed and replaced by a fence in connection with the development.

CONSULTATIONS

South West Water raises no objections.

The Environment Agency raises no objections.

The County Director of Children and Young People's Services requests a contribution towards education infrastructure.

The County Director of Environment, Economy and Culture raises no objections subject to the imposition of conditions relating to visibility splays, and the provision of access, parking and turning facilities prior to occupation.

The Head of Environmental Health Services raises no objections subject to the imposition of conditions relating to land contamination, hours of construction and demolition, noise impact assessment, noise limiters and kitchen extraction.

PLANNING POLICIES/POLICY GUIDANCE

Devon County Structure Plan 2001-2016
CO6 - Quality of New Development

Exeter Local Plan First Review 1995-2011
AP1 - Design and Location of Development
AP2 - Sequential Approach
H1 - Search Sequence
H2 - Location Priorities
H5 - Diversity of Housing
H6 - Affordable Housing
H7 - Housing for Disabled People
T2 - Accessibility Criteria
T3 - Encouraging Use of Sustainable Modes
T10 - Car Parking Standards
EN2 - Contaminated Land
DG1 - Objectives of Urban Design
DG4 - Residential Layout and Amenity
DG2 - Energy Conservation
DG6 - Vehicle Circulation and Car Parking in Residential Development
DG7 - Crime Prevention and Safety

OBSERVATIONS

It is considered that the principle of conversion and extension of the church building to residential use is acceptable. Although the extension and additional storey will result in a building which has a significantly greater bulk and massing than the existing church, it would not affect the amenity of neighbours.

The proposed extension has the unfortunate effect of dominating the limited outdoor amenity space provided for the occupants. This will result in overshadowing of the space for large periods of the year, and making it a less pleasant space to use. However, the only way to address this concern would be to lose a significant part of the proposed accommodation. On balance it is concluded that this would not justify a recommendation of refusal.

Some details of the proposed conversion are considered to be unsatisfactory and are therefore the subject of ongoing discussions with the applicant's agent. In particular, the proportion of the windows in the proposed extension do not relate well to the existing elevation due to their horizontal rather than vertical emphasis. There are also concerns about the poor detailing of the down pipes, which are missing from two elevations.

The design of the proposed new build element of the scheme is considered to be acceptable. It has an acceptable relationship with the main church building and with neighbours, and would provide a good standard of amenity for the occupants. Its scale and massing are appropriate in relation to its surroundings and its contemporary design would fit in well with the more traditional residential buildings in the area. It would not be prominent within the street scene because it is behind the church.

The shared surface to the parking could potentially be better designed to reduce the extent of hard standing and create an informal 'homezone' type amenity space that provides for residents in the new flats. This is being pursued with the applicant's agent.

The ecological report submitted with the application requires provision of bird boxes and should include swift boxes within the new build/roof extension. This can be secured via a condition.

It has been suggested that the retained church tower should feature an element of public art. This is not shown on the drawings and is again the subject of ongoing discussions. It is considered appropriate to secure this by way of a condition.

The concerns of local residents about parking are not shared by the County Director of Environment, Economy and Culture. The parking provision on site is in fact in excess of the amount normally required for over-55s units, which is 25 per cent.

Nine of the proposed flats would be for over-55s and therefore an education contribution would not be expected. A contribution towards education infrastructure in the locality will be required for each of the remaining three flats.

NORTHERN AREA WORKING PARTY

Members were concerned at the design and the bulky appearance of the main building, the “bulky” appearance having been caused by the extension to the church. It was felt an improvement to the design of the property could be achieved. Members supported further discussions to improve the design and noted that the application would be considered by the Planning Committee in due course.

SUSTAINABILITY

The building design is based on 'Passiv-Haus' principles. A passive house is a building in which a comfortable interior climate can be maintained without active heating and cooling systems. The buildings heats and cool themselves. The principles were developed in Germany and are used to achieve the highest levels of energy efficiency and ecological design standards. Increased insulation standards, exceptional levels of air tightness and a compact building skin mean that heat losses can be reduced to a minimum resulting in a requirement for very low space heating. By choosing the best orientation for the buildings and by optimising solar gains, the energy performance of the proposed design has been improved so that a conventional heating system is not required.

RECOMMENDATION

Subject to receipt and consideration of revised plans to address concerns relating to details of the external appearance of the proposed building, and to receipt of a contribution towards education infrastructure in the locality, the Head of Planning and Building Control be authorised to APPROVE the application subject to the following conditions:

APPROVE subject to the following conditions:

- 1) C05 - Time Limit - Commencement
- 2) C15 - Compliance with Drawings
- 3) C17 - Submission of Materials
- 4) C35 - Landscape Scheme
- 5) C36 - No Trees to be Felled
- 6) C37 - Replacement Planting
- 7) C38 - Trees - Temporary Fencing

- 8) C70 - Contaminated Land
- 9) Construction work shall not take place outside the following times: 8am to 6pm (Mondays to Fridays); 8am to 1pm (Saturdays); nor at any time on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays.
Reason: In the interests of local amenity.
- 10) Prior to the commencement of the development, details of all external plant/machinery (such as associated with exhaust air heat pumps) including sound power levels, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
Reason: In the interests of local amenity.
- 11) The applicant shall undertake a noise impact assessment for this application, which shall be submitted and approved in writing prior to commencement of the development. This report shall consider the impact of noise from the development on local receptors (including those introduced by the application) and shall include noise from plant and equipment (including kitchen extraction plant and air source heat pumps) as well as noise from events. If, following the above assessment, the local planning authority concludes that noise mitigation measures are required, the applicant shall then submit a scheme of works to ensure that the development does not have a significant negative impact on local amenity. These measures shall be agreed in writing by the local planning authority and shall be implemented prior to and throughout the occupation of the development.
Reason: In the interests of local amenity.
- 12) There shall be no amplified music, voice or tannoy system used within the community facilities unless routed through a suitable noise limiter. The noise limiter, its installation and operation shall be approved in writing prior to occupation of the development. It shall be operated and maintained as approved thereafter.
Reason: In the interests of local amenity.
- 13) Details of the kitchen extraction system, including odour abatement equipment, should be submitted and approved in writing by the LPA prior to commencement of the development. The system shall be implemented, maintained and operated as agreed thereafter.
Reason: In the interests of local amenity.
- 14) The flats hereby approved (other than the three flats identified as mobility units) shall only be occupied by persons over 55 years old.
Reason: In accordance with the terms of the application, because the parking provision is insufficient for unrestricted occupation and because unrestricted occupation would require a contribution towards education infrastructure.
- 15) No development shall take place until a Wildlife Plan which demonstrates how the proposed development will be managed in perpetuity to enhance wildlife has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall be carried out entirely in accordance with the approved plan.
Reason: In the interests of protecting and improving existing, and creating new wildlife habitats in the area.
- 16) None of the proposed flats shall be occupied until an item of public art has been provided on the tower in accordance with details which shall first have been agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
Reason: In the interests of the local environment.

- 17) A visibility splay shall be provided, laid out and maintained for that purpose at the site access to Brookway where the visibility splay provides intervisibility between any points X and Y axes at a height of 0.6m above the adjacent carriageway level and the distance back from the nearer edge of the carriageway of the public highway (identified as X) shall be 2.4m and the visibility distance along the nearer edge of the carriageway of the public highway (identified as Y) shall be 25m in a northerly direction.
Reason: To provide adequate visibility from and of emerging vehicles, in the interest of public safety.
- 18) No part of the development hereby approved shall be brought into its intended use and/or occupied until the access and visibility splay shall have been provided in accordance with details that shall previously have been submitted to, agreed and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority and retained for that purpose at all times.
Reason: To ensure that adequate facilities are available for the traffic attracted to the site in the interest of public safety.
- 19) No part of the development hereby approved shall be brought into its intended use and/or occupied until the on-site access drive, parking and turning facilities have been provided, surfaced and marked out in accordance with the requirements of this permission and retained for those purposes at all times.
Reason: To ensure that adequate facilities are available for the traffic attracted to the site.

Local Government (Access to Information) 1985 (as amended).

Background papers used in compiling the report:

Files of planning applications available for inspection from the Customer Service Centre, Civic Centre, Paris Street, Exeter: Telephone 01392 265223