

SECTION '2' – Applications meriting special consideration

Application No : 11/02519/OUT

Ward:
**Bromley Common And
Keston**

Address : Keston Methodist Church Croydon
Road Keston

OS Grid Ref: E: 541965 N: 165134

Applicant : Bromley Circuit Of The Methodist Church
Objections : YES

Description of Development:

Conversion of church building to residential use to provide 2 four bedroom units and 1 three bedroom unit, to include introduction of mezzanine level, new dormer windows, elevation alterations and new porch and associated car parking and bin store at rear.

Key designations:

Biggin Hill Safeguarding Birds
Biggin Hill Safeguarding Area
Green Belt
London City Airport Safeguarding
Stat Routes

Proposal

- The proposal seeks outline permission for the conversion of the existing church building to residential use in order to provide 2 four bedroom units and 1 three bedroom unit, including the introduction of a mezzanine level within the existing building, new dormer window extensions, elevation alterations and a new porch.
- The proposal will include the creation of a residential curtilage for each property which will include amenity space, associated car parking and a new bin store at rear.

Location

The application site is located on the northern side of Croydon Road and hosts a detached church building. The site is located on Green Belt land.

Comments from Local Residents

Nearby owners/occupiers were notified of the application and representations were received which can be summarised as follows:

- there should be adequate parking provision on site as roadside parking in the area is extremely limited;
- residents already suffer from cars obstructing their driveways;
- the junction with Oakley Road, Croydon Road and Westerham Road gets very congested and is very dangerous;
- there have been many accidents on this road – speeding is a great problem;
- Croydon Road is very heavily used and tailbacks often occur in both directions, any further access roads should not be allowed;
- have been informed by a neighbour that bats are resident in the roofspace of the church.

Comments from Consultees

The Crime Prevention Officer stated that should permission be recommended, the 'Secure by Design' condition be imposed.

No objection was raised from Thames Water, Highways Drainage or the Highways Engineer.

Transport for London (TfL) stated that no objection was raised with regard to the scheme, subject to a condition being imposed relating to car and cycle parking in line with LBB and London Plan standards, in addition that a Construction Management Plan is provided and secured by condition.

The Environmental Health Officer stated that there might be an issue with the provision of adequate natural light and ventilation, in addition there is no provision of internal facilities for drying clothes (i.e. tumble drier or drying cabinet).

Countryside Management were consulted with regard to the local resident mentioning that they understood bats may live on the site. It was found that the interior of the building has a suspended wooden ceiling, therefore it was difficult to assess the roof space. However whilst there are a few places where bats could potentially enter the roof space, as such it is possible that bats use the church, no evidence was found to suggest that they do.

It was noted that the current application is in Outline and that the proposal is to leave the roof intact apart from two sets of three dormer windows. It was therefore suggested that when detailed permission is applied for some incorporation of roof space so that bats can use it is proposed, and that a precautionary approach should be taken - a suitable time of the year to avoid bat winter or maternity roosting for the works to occur, however it was considered that this can be dealt with at the detailed stage should outline permission be granted.

Planning Considerations

The application falls to be determined in accordance with the following policies of the Unitary Development Plan:

BE1 (Design of New Development), H1 (Housing Supply), H7 (Housing Density and Design), H12 (Conversion of Non-Residential Buildings to Residential Use), T3 (Parking), T6 (Pedestrians), T7 (Cyclists), T17 (Servicing of Premises), T18 (Road Safety) and G1 (Green Belt).

Planning History

The only recent planning history relates to a single storey canopy to the side of the building which was permitted under ref. 10/01683.

Conclusions

Members may consider that the main issues relating to the application are the effect that it would have on the character of the Green Belt area and the impact that it would have on the amenities of the occupants of surrounding residential properties.

The existing building has not been used as a church since the final service on 19th September 2010. During school term times, parts of the church hall and ancillary rooms were used under a yearly license by a private company, Keston Pre-School Playgroup Ltd. This pre-school however closed on 15th July 2011. As such, the building has not been in regular use since September 2010 and has not been used at all for any activity since the summer of 2011.

Policy H12 of the UDP refers to the conversion of non-residential buildings to residential use, which in effect states that the Council will permit the conversion of genuinely redundant non-residential buildings to residential use, provided that the resulting accommodation and amenity space is of a satisfactory quality.

The application is supported by a statement indicating that the number of people attending the church services had been reducing over several years, when the decision was made in early 2010 that the continuing function of the church was no longer viable. The remaining members of the church have since re-located to other nearby churches.

In relation to the pre-school at the site, the statement has provided details of two other pre-schools in close proximity, which indicates that the loss of the pre-school on this site would not be detrimental to the area.

Policy G1 refers to conversions of buildings within the Green Belt, such as the church building, and states in effect that the material change of use of land will be considered inappropriate unless they maintain the openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt.

Whilst the current application is in outline format only, the plans are indicative and suggest that the scheme would not increase the amount of site coverage of buildings, and the only form of floor area increase will be through incorporating a mezzanine floor within the footprint of the existing building and including dormer extensions. Despite these additions to the existing building, it is considered that

this will not harm the openness or rural nature of the Green Belt site and surrounding land.

The scheme will create residential curtilages within the existing site. This can be controlled by way of condition if considered necessary by removing 'permitted development' rights to prevent overdevelopment of the site and each plot being created.

The scheme will also provide amenity space in the form of garden areas for each unit, along with additional amenity space in the form of a balcony or roof terrace for each unit. This particular site is adjoined to the east by a garden centre, and to the west by allotment gardens, therefore the proposed roof terraces and balconies are not considered to have any detrimental impact upon the amenities of the area as they will not lead to any direct overlooking of other residential properties, nor will the occupiers of the future units be overlooked when using the terraced areas.

In terms of the comments received by a local resident relating to the possibility of bats using the building, this issue has been investigated by the Local Planning Authority. The view has been taken that whilst no particular evidence was found when the site was investigated, the time of year means that it is likely that if bats are present on site, they will be in hibernation and the amount of evidence available would be limited. In any case, the current proposal does not seek to carry out major works to the roofspace, where any bats would be likely to use if they are present at the site, as such should permission be granted it is suggested that the detailed application provide further information and a method statement outlining exactly what precautions will be taken in order to prevent any disruption to the bats.

On balance, Members may therefore take the view that the proposal would not be materially harmful to the character of the building, it would not harm the openness of the Green Belt location, and that sufficient information has been provided at this outline stage to demonstrate that the functionality of the church was no longer a viable option. Suitable conditions can be imposed in order to control any future development on the site which would further reduce any impact upon the Green Belt location, any possible protected species on the site, and ensure that the residential curtilage as set out in the indicative plans is adhered to.

Members are therefore requested to determine that on balance the proposal is acceptable and worthy of permission being granted based upon the outline details provided, prior to an application for details being submitted in the future.

Background papers referred to during production of this report comprise all correspondence on files refs. 10/01683 and 11/02519, excluding exempt information.

as amended by documents received on 05.09.2011

RECOMMENDATION: PERMISSION

Subject to the following conditions:

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|----|--------|---|---------|
| 1 | ACA02 | Details req. pursuant outline permission | access, |
| | | appearance, landscaping, layout and scale | |
| | ACA02R | Reason A02 | |
| 2 | ACA03 | Compliance with landscaping details | 1 |
| | ACA03R | Reason A03 | |
| 3 | ACA07 | Boundary enclosure - no detail submitted | |
| | ACA07R | Reason A07 | |
| 4 | ACC01 | Satisfactory materials (ext'nl surfaces) | |
| | ACC01R | Reason C01 | |
| 5 | ACC03 | Details of windows | |
| | ACC03R | Reason C03 | |
| 6 | ACD04 | Foul water drainage - no details submit | |
| | ADD04R | Reason D04 | |
| 7 | ACD06 | Sustainable drainage system (SuDS) | |
| | ADD06R | Reason D06 | |
| 8 | ACH02 | Satisfactory parking - no details submit | |
| | ACH02R | Reason H02 | |
| 9 | ACH04 | Size of parking bays/garages | |
| | ACH04R | Reason H04 | |
| 10 | ACH08 | Details of turning area | |
| | ACH08R | Reason H08 | |
| 11 | ACH18 | Refuse storage - no details submitted | |
| | ACH18R | Reason H18 | |
| 12 | ACH22 | Bicycle Parking | |
| | ACH22R | Reason H22 | |
| 13 | ACH29 | Construction Management Plan | |
| | ACH29R | Reason H29 | |
| 14 | ACH32 | Highway Drainage | |
| | ADH32R | Reason H32 | |
| 15 | ACI02 | Rest of "pd" Rights - Class A, B,C and E | |

Reason: In order to protect the openness of the Green Belt land, the character of Nash Conservation Area and to comply with Policies BE1, BE11 and G1 of the Unitary Development Plan.

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| 16 | ACI21 | Secured By Design | |
| | ACI21R | I21 reason | |
| 17 | ACI24 | Details of means of screening-balconies | |
| | ACI24R | Reason I24R | |
| 18 | ACK01 | Compliance with submitted plan | |

Reason: In order to protect the openness of the Green Belt land, the character of Nash Conservation Area and to comply with Policies BE1, BE11 and G1 of the Unitary Development Plan.

- 19 The residential curtilage of the development hereby permitted shall be as shown on the permitted drawing Number 9911/02 and shall be permanently retained as such thereafter.

Reason: In order to protect the openness of the Green Belt location and to comply with Policies BE1 and G1 of the Unitary Development Plan.

Reasons for granting permission:

In granting permission the Local Planning Authority had regard to the following policies of the Unitary Development Plan:

- BE1 Design of New Development
- H1 Housing Supply
- H7 Housing Density and Design
- H12 Conversion of Non-Residential Buildings to Residential Use
- T3 Parking
- T6 Pedestrians
- T7 Cyclists
- T17 Servicing of Premises
- T18 Road Safety
- G1 Green Belt

The development is considered to be satisfactory in relation to the following:

- (a) the character of development in the surrounding area;
- (b) the appearance of the development in the street scene;
- (c) the character of the development in the surrounding areas;
- (d) the safety of pedestrians and motorists on the adjacent highway;
- (e) the safety and security of buildings and spaces around them;
- (f) accessibility to buildings;
- (g) sustainability issues;
- (h) the provision of satisfactory living accommodation for future residents of the flats/houses;
- (i) the relationship of the proposed conversion to the adjacent properties;
- (j) the housing policies of the development plan;
- (k) the preservation or enhancement of the Green Belt;
- (l) the preservation or enhancement of the adjacent Conservation Area;

and having regard to all other matters raised.

INFORMATIVE(S)

- 1 RDI10 Consult Land Charges/Street Numbering
- 2 RDI15 Highways Act – overhanging vehicles
- 3 The applicant is advised that Thames Water will aim to provide customers with a minimum pressure of 10m head (approx 1 bar) and a flow rate of 9 litres/minute at the point where it leaves Thames Waters pipes. The developer should take account of this minimum pressure in the design of the proposed development.
- 4 The applicant is advised that additional surveys in relation to the presence of bats and reptiles at the site will be required in line with their statutory obligations under the Protected Species and Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

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