

**Application No : 10/00971/FULL2**

**Ward:  
Kelsey And Eden Park**

**Address : Elmer Lodge 11 Dunbar Avenue  
Beckenham BR3 3RG**

**OS Grid Ref: E: 536385 N: 168426**

**Applicant : St John Coptic Orthodox Church**

**Objections : YES**

**Description of Development:**

Change of use from public house (Class A4) to community hall, meeting rooms and chapel (Class D1)

Key designations:

Locally Listed Building

**Proposal**

Planning permission is sought for the change of use of the Elmer Lodge public house to a community hall, meeting rooms and chapel (Class D1). The application has been submitted by the St John Coptic Orthodox Church which is seeking a permanent meeting place and chapel, and currently meets and hold services at St Marks Church in Bromley.

No external changes are proposed to the building, except for the removal of the existing public house signage. The upper floors will be retained in their current layout, with residential accommodation to be used by the church minister. It is proposed that the premises would be used between the following hours:

- Monday to Friday and Saturdays – 8am to 11pm
- Sundays – 9am to 6pm

A planning statement has been submitted in support of the application, which states the following:

- the proposed use would meet an identified faith need
- at present the congregation meet at St Marks Church in Bromley, however as they are only guests they must defer to the main congregation, meaning that on key occasions (i.e. Christmas and Easter) the Church do not have their own meeting hall or chapel in which to meet and pray
- the proposal would therefore provide the Church with their own meeting place and chapel for their own use
- the site is accessible by modes of transport other than the private car

- proposed use would be less intensive than the former public house use
- primary use of the premises would occur on Sunday mornings, usually with 30-40 people on the site
- the most intensive use would be during the main Christian festivals
- the new facility would also be used for social functions by the congregation such as wedding receptions and christening celebrations
- parking could be managed at times of high demand
- use of the site as community hall/meeting rooms would lead to significantly less noise and disturbance than the former public house use, to the benefit of the amenities of local residents in the surrounding area
- any late night activity would be limited to occasional social functions and the rare late night service

An additional plan was submitted showing the details of the car parking layout and to incorporate coach parking.

### **Location**

The application site is located on the eastern side of Dunbar Avenue, close to the junction with Eden Park Avenue and Croydon Road. At present the site comprises a large detached building which was most recently in use as a public house (The Elmer Lodge), and is primarily surrounded by hard surfacing for car parking. The host building is locally listed.

### **Comments from Local Residents**

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

- concerns regarding hoarding that has been erected to front of site
- concerns that proposed use is more exclusive and less beneficial to community than existing use as licensed premises
- works already being undertaken at the site
- meetings have already been taking place
- residents of Dunbar Avenue have not been openly consulted as to how premises should be used
- problems with parking have not been considered
- concerns regarding changes to historic building
- concerns for overlooking to rear of site
- potential for noise and disturbance, particularly through car parking
- views from rear conservatory area (location of altar) would allow congregation to overlook properties on Balmoral Avenue
- the new owners have not communicated with local residents prior to the application being submitted
- concerns for parking and road safety

In addition to the above, two letters of support was received which can be summarised as follows:

- no objection provided all clauses stated are followed
- concerns regarding parking and use of flats but considers that the change of use would benefit residents

### **Comments from Consultees**

From the technical Highways perspective no objections are raised in view of the additional information submitted.

### **Planning Considerations**

The main planning Policies of relevance to this application are as follows:

BE1 Design of New Development  
BE10 Locally Listed Building  
C1 Community Facilities  
T3 Parking  
T18 Road Safety

This application has been referred to Committee because it is considered to be of significant local interest.

### **Planning History**

There is extensive planning history at the site, most recently relating to decking, a smoking shelter and new fencing to the rear (ref. 08/01176 – application refused) and for a childs play area with timber rope bridge and hard and soft landscaping (08/02130 – application refused).

### **Conclusions**

It is considered that the proposed change of use to a community hall, meeting rooms and chapel would meet with an identified faith need for the area. The site is accessible by means of transport other than the car and accessible to the members of the community it is intended to serve (whom are based mostly within Bromley and Beckenham), and on balance Members may agree that the requirements of Policy C1 'Community Facilities' would be met. With regard to the impact of the proposal on parking demand in the area and conditions of Highway safety, Members will note the plan submitted showing the detailed parking layout within the site and the advice of the Council's Highways engineers and may agree that the proposal is acceptable in those terms. Indeed in any case, parking demand associated with the use may not be significantly greater than the former use of the building as a public house.

With regard to the impact of the proposed use to the amenities of neighbouring residents, Members will be aware that concerns have been raised regarding the potential for noise and disturbance and overlooking to the rear of the site towards properties on Balmoral Avenue. Again however, Members may agree that any impacts with regard to these aspects of the proposed use may be no more significant than with the former public house use. Indeed, as noted in the applicant's planning statement, the proposed use would primarily be used on Sunday mornings and may in fact be less intensive than the former public house use.

Finally, with regard to the impact of the proposed change of use to the character and special local interest of the host building, Members will note that aside from the removal of the existing pub signage no external alterations are proposed as part of this application. The proposed use may not significantly affect the character and special local interest of the host building (indeed it has not always been in use as a public house with permission having originally been granted in 1965).

To conclude, Members may agree that the proposed use would meet an identified faith need within a building accessible by means of transport other than the car, and without a significantly greater impact on the amenities of local residents than may have occurred from the former public house use.

Background papers referred to during production of this report comprise all correspondence on files refs. 10/00971, 08/02130 and 08/01176, excluding exempt information.

as amended by documents received on 20.05.2010

## **RECOMMENDATION: PERMISSION**

Subject to the following conditions:

- 1     ACA01        Commencement of development within 3 yrs  
      ACA01R      A01 Reason 3 years
- 2     ACH03        Satisfactory parking - full application  
      ACH03R      Reason H03
- 3     ACH28        Car park management  
      ACH28R      Reason H28
- 4     ACJ01        Restriction on use (2 inserts)        community hall, meeting  
                  rooms and chapel

**Reason:** In the interests of the amenities of neighbouring residents and in order to comply with Policy BE1 of the Unitary Development Plan.

- 5     The use hereby permitted shall not operate before 8am nor after 11pm Monday to Saturday, nor before 9am or after 6pm on Sundays.

**Reason:** In order to comply with Policy T18 of the Unitary Development Plan and in the interest of pedestrian and vehicular safety.

6 The southern access to the site shall be used for ingress only and the northern access for egress only. Details of suitable signs to indicate this shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the approved signs shall be displayed before the premises are first used and be permanently retained thereafter.

**Reason:** In order to comply with Policy T18 of the Unitary Development Plan and in the interest of pedestrian and vehicular safety.

**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  
BE10 Locally Listed Building  
C1 Community Facilities  
T3 Parking  
T18 Road Safety

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

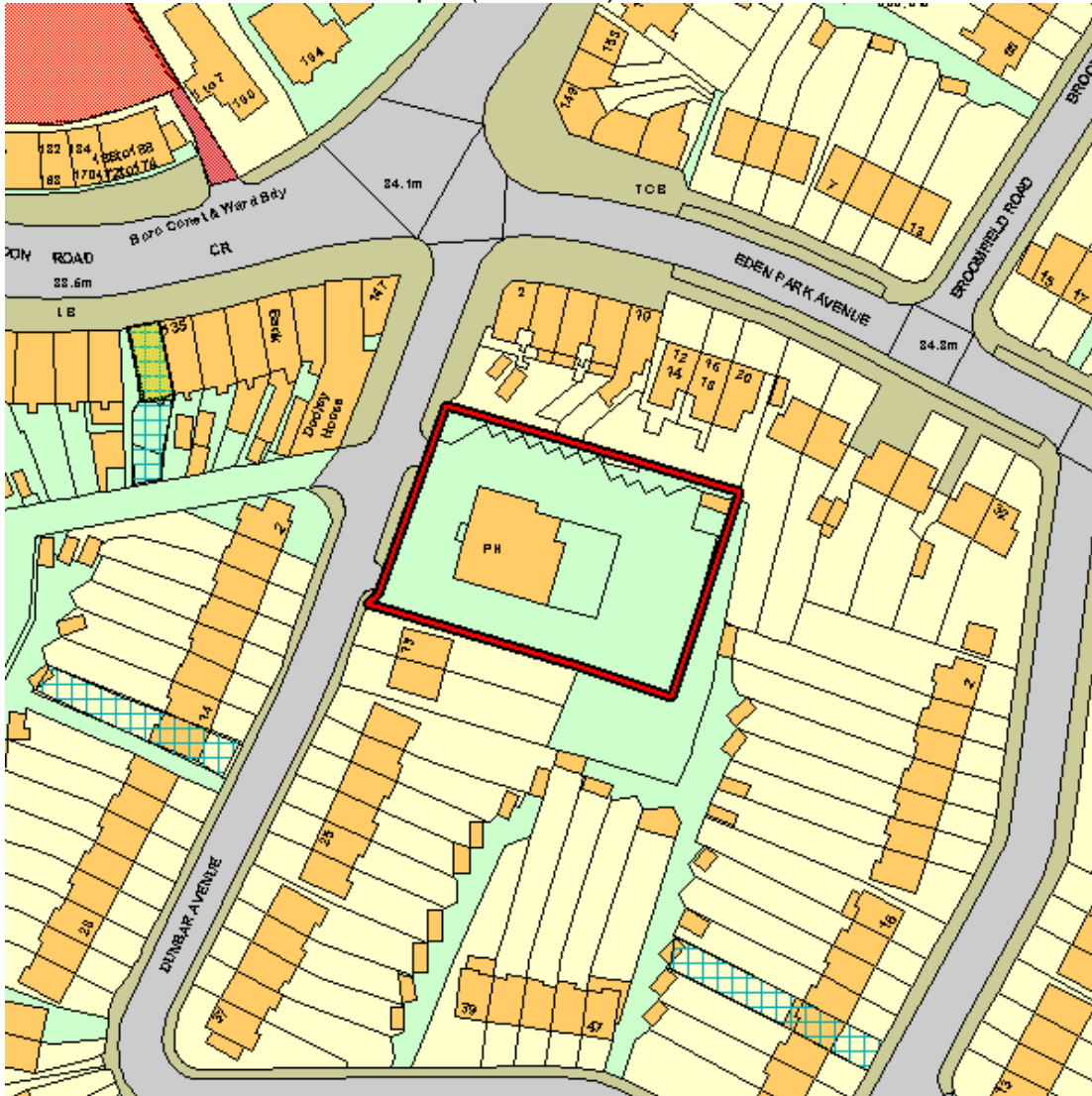
- (a) the meeting of an identified community (faith) need
- (b) the location of the site which is accessible by means other than the private car and the community that the use is intended to serve
- (c) the impact of the development to the amenities of residents within the vicinity of the site
- (d) the impact on the amenities of the occupiers of adjacent and nearby properties
- (e) the privacy of occupiers of adjacent and nearby properties
- (f) the safety of pedestrians and motorists on the adjacent highway

and having regard to all other matters raised.

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