

SECTION '2' – Applications meriting special consideration

**Application No :** 14/01814/FULL2

**Ward:**  
**Copers Cope**

**Address :** Rear Of 10 Bromley Road Beckenham  
BR3 5JE

**OS Grid Ref:** E: 537532 N: 169531

**Applicant :** Mr David Jackson

**Objections :** YES

**Description of Development:**

Change of use of existing car garage and repair workshop (B1(C)) to church use (D1).

Key designations:

Conservation Area: Beckenham St. Georges

Areas of Archaeological Significance

Biggin Hill Safeguarding Birds

Biggin Hill Safeguarding Area

London City Airport Safeguarding

London City Airport Safeguarding Birds

**Proposal**

The application seeks permission for the change of use of the existing car garage and repair workshop (B1(c)) to the rear of No. 10 Bromley Road, Beckenham to church use (D1).

The application site is currently occupied by Church Motor Company for use as a car garage and repair workshop, who lease the building from Beckenham Methodist Church. The applicants, Beckenham Methodist Church, who own the workshop/garage, seek to change the use of the building to church use. The statement submitted as part of the applications states the proposed use of the building to be as follows:

- used as facilities for the storage of equipment of many kinds supporting its mission in Beckenham including for worship, social and community activities, youth work (Scouts, Guides) and church property maintenance.
- use the space for carrying on activities - in principle any of the activities engaged in on the main church premises
- use the room for scout projects

**Location**

The garage/workshop is situated to the rear of Nos. 10,12 and 14 Bromley Road, Beckenham and is accessed from Bromley Road by an access way located between No. 16 Bromley Road and Beckenham Methodist Church. It is a single storey building which is attached to the church hall belonging to Beckenham Methodist Church.

### **Comments from Local Residents**

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

- premises should remain as a car garage
- converting the use will not be of any benefit to the local community
- loss of an asset to the local community
- loss of a valuable local business to Beckenham
- supporting comments regarding quality of the service received from the car garage
- loss of jobs
- loss of a business which contributes to the local area
- destroying long established business for storage area
- protection of business use
- loss of a successful business
- loss of passing trade to local area brought by garage
- loss of business would affect other businesses which rely on the custom of the garage
- loss of a business with a defined need as the business wishes to remain in the premises
- loss of a small, local business
- loss of business would be a detriment to the people of Beckenham
- notice period of lease too short to enable business to try to relocate
- proposed use for storage would not benefit the community or economy of Beckenham
- premises is ideal for existing use as car garage and repair workshop
- proposed change from business use is contrary to policy EMP5 of the UDP
- no full or proper marketing of the site has been undertaken to confirm that there is no longer a business need for the premises.
- existing business wishes to continue to operate from the premises
- vehicle trips to premises, intensity of use and potential noise associated with the proposed use would cause harm to the amenities of the surrounding properties and additional problems to the current access prejudicial to pedestrian and highway safety

It should be noted that whilst there are a number of objections, some can only be given limited weight as no contact information in the form of email or postal address have been provided and as such the objection is considered incomplete.

Any further comments received will be reported verbally at the meeting.

### **Comments from Consultees**

The Council's Highways Engineer raises no objection.

The Council's Environmental Health Officer raises no objection.

### **Planning Considerations**

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

EMP5 Development Outside Business Areas

C1 Community Facilities

BE11 Conservation Areas

T3 Parking

The London Plan and National Planning Policy Framework are also key considerations in determination of this application.

The above policies are considered to be consistent with the principles and objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.

### **Planning History**

The relevant planning history at the property is summarised as follows:

Planning permission was granted under ref. 77/02858 for the rebuilding of single storey building destroyed by fire. Planning records in relation to this application indicate the use of the building to be for a car garage/workshop.

### **Conclusions**

The main issues relating to the application are the effect that it would have on the character of the area, the impact that it would have on the amenities of the occupants of surrounding residential and commercial properties, parking and highway safety, together with the acceptability of the change of use of the premises resulting in the loss of business premises which is located outside of a business area.

Policy C1 relates to the provision of community facilities including those for social and faith needs. It states that a change of use for a proposal that meets an identified social or faith need will normally be permitted provided that it is accessible by modes of transport other than the car and accessible to the members of the community it is intended to serve. The application site is located off a main road close to Beckenham High Street and is attached the church hall belonging to Beckenham Methodist Church. Comments have been received locally which state that the storage use of the building which is proposed as part of the application would not benefit the community or economy of Beckenham, and that additional problems to the current access would be prejudicial to pedestrian and highway safety. However, the Council's Highways Engineers have stated that the site lies within an area with a medium PTAL rate of 4 and that the proposed change of use to church use is unlikely to have a significant impact on the local

highway. Additionally, given the location of the building next to the existing church hall and Beckenham Methodist Church, it would be accessible to the members of the community it is intended to serve, and would provide an extension to activities already provided by the church i.e. Scout and Guide groups. As such, Members may consider that the requirements of policy C1 are met.

Policy EMP5 is relevant to this case which refers to the redevelopment of business sites or premises outside of the Designated Business Areas. It states that the redevelopment of these sites will be permitted provided that the size, configuration, access arrangements or other characteristics make it unsuitable for uses Classes B1, B2 or B8 use, and that full and proper marketing of the site confirms the unsuitability and financial non-viability of the site or premises for those uses. Furthermore, this policy seeks to protect existing commercial sites and small business sites, many of which are occupied by local independent traders, providing specialist services, who form an important part of the local economy. Whilst some objections have been received with regards to the proposed use of the building as church use in connection with the neighbouring Beckenham Methodist Church, a large number of objections have been received with regards to the loss of the current use, which is car garage and repair workshop. A letter of objection has also been received from the current occupiers of the building, Church Motor Company, which includes their wish to continue to operate from the premises.

From the information provided as part of this application, there does not appear to have been any marketing of the site and as such it does not meet the policy requirements of Policy EMP5 which are designed to retain B-use class employment sites, whilst taking into consideration viability. Furthermore, a number of letters have been provided from the customers of the current occupiers and the occupiers themselves with regards to their wish for the business operation to continue. Accordingly, Members may consider that given that no information has been provided about marketing of this premises the application should be refused.

Members are advised to consider the balance of merits between retaining the business use in the Borough where there is an identified need and on the other side, the need for community facilities. However, given the information outlined above Members may consider that on balance the application should be refused.

Background papers referred to during production of this report comprise all correspondence on the application file, excluding exempt information.

## **RECOMMENDATION: PERMISSION BE REFUSED**

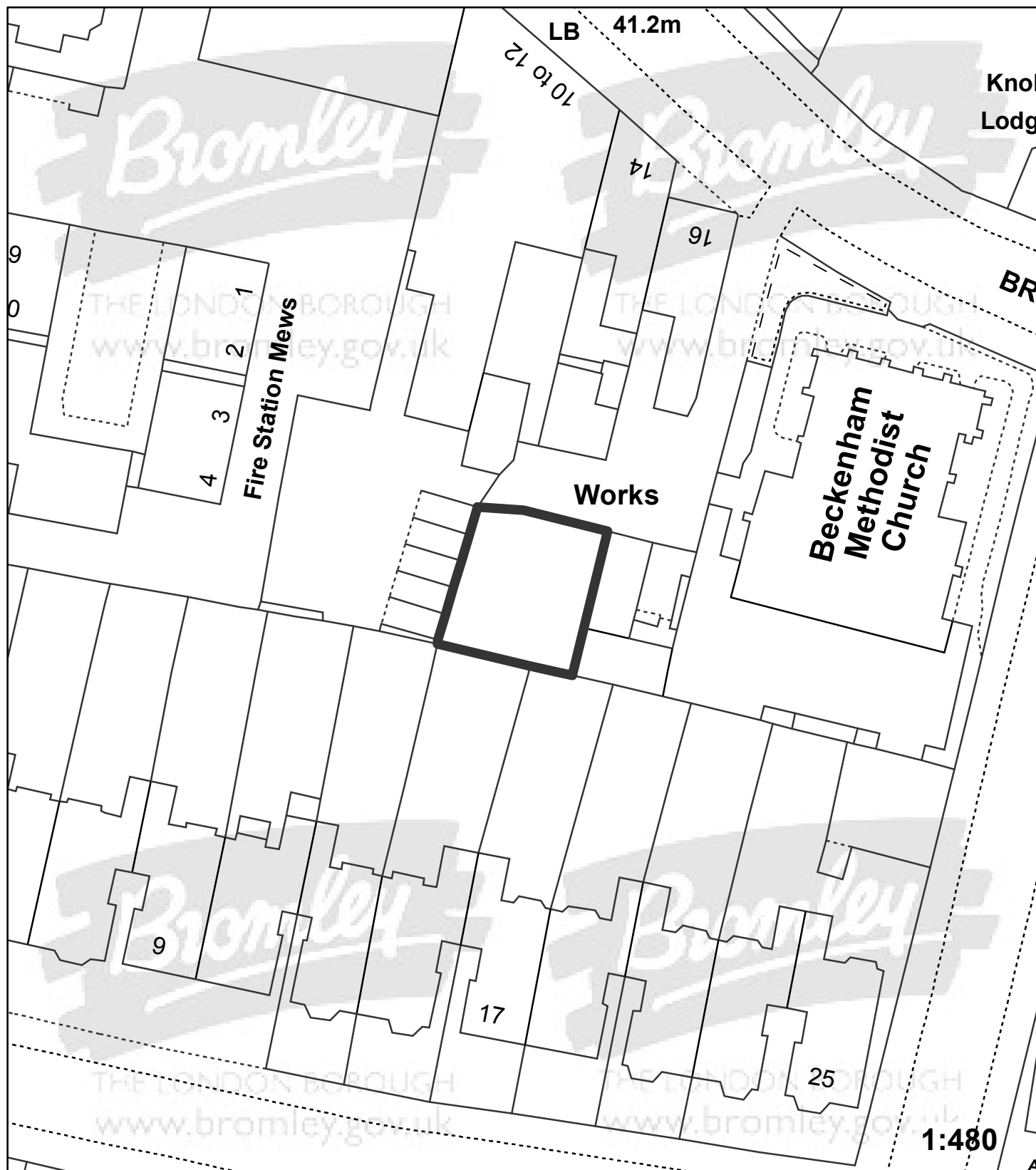
The reasons for refusal are:

- 1 The proposal would result in the unacceptable loss of a business unit contrary to Policy EMP5 of the Unitary Development Plan which seeks to safeguard sufficient supply of land in the Borough for business uses.

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"This plan is provided to identify the location of the site and should not be used to identify the extent of the application site"

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