

Council is willing to assist in identifying possible solutions through the pre-application advice service.

Officer's Assessment

The application has been called in by Councillor Richard Cornelius, the reasons for doing this are that the space is needed for the continuation of the church and does only replace parking space that has been lost immediately adjacent. The proposed use of grasscrete overcomes any objection to loss of grass.

1. Site Description

The application site is located in an Area of Special Advert Control, Smoke Control Zone, within the Totteridge Conservation Area and is also covered by an Article 4 Direction.

A number of trees are located on the site and they are protected by their location within the Conservation Area. Additionally a number of trees are located adjoining the access way leading to the Church Hall, and surrounding the site which have the further protection of Tree Preservation Orders. The former Vicarage, which adjoins the site, is a Grade II Listed Building; St Andrew's Church is also listed. The church hall is an undesignated building.

The area for the proposed parking spaces is sited next to the Church Hall and the existing cemetery. The site is accessed via an existing access road which runs between the Church and 44 Totteridge Village. The area designated for the proposed car park is currently an area of open green space and has the character of an open garden space. The site lies to the rear of the gardens of 7 and 9 Northcliffe Drive, the trees to the rear boundary of no.9 Northcliffe Drive have a tree protection order.

The site for the proposed parking is currently an undisturbed open green space with a number of trees and hedging, giving the site an open semi-rural feel and links in to the existing cemetery with a line of trees defining the boundary between the cemetery and the existing 'garden area'. This all contributes to the character of the site as part of the semi-rural part of the Totteridge Conservation Area.

St Andrew's Church Hall lies behind St Andrew's Church and the former vicarage in Totteridge Village. The building is a single storey pitched roof structure dating from the early 20th century.

2. Site History

Reference: 15/07241/PNT

Address: Church End House, 44 Totteridge Village, London, N20 8PR

Decision: Application Received

Decision Date: No Decision Made.

Description: installation of telecommunications

Reference: 16/1644/HSE

Address: Church End House, 44 Totteridge Village, London, N20 8PR

Decision: Approved subject to conditions

Decision Date: 13 May 2016

Description: Erection of new garage with residential accommodation in the roof space for use ancillary to main house following demolition of existing garage

Reference: 16/1645/LBC

Address: Church End House, 44 Totteridge Village, London, N20 8PR

Decision: Withdrawn

Decision Date: 16 May 2016

Description: Erection of new garage with residential accommodation in the roof space for use ancillary to main house following demolition of existing garage

Reference: 16/1646/FUL

Address: Church End House, 44 Totteridge Village, London, N20 8PR

Decision: Application Returned

Decision Date: No Decision Made.

Description: Demolition of Existing garage and the erection of a new garage with ancillary residential accommodation within roofspace.

Reference: B/03735/13

Address: Church End House, 44 Totteridge Village, London, N20 8PR

Decision: Application Invalid On Receipt

Decision Date: No Decision Made.

Description: Erection of boundary fence and access gates, internal alterations, replace door with window to front elevation and alterations to down pipes and guttering.,

Reference: B/03989/13

Address: Church End House, 44 Totteridge Village, London, N20 8PR

Decision: Approved subject to conditions

Decision Date: 11 October 2013

Description: Internal alterations. Removal for door and reinstatement of brickwork. Alterations to down pipes and guttering.

Reference: B/05623/13

Address: Church End House, 44 Totteridge Village, London, N20 8PR

Decision: Approved subject to conditions

Decision Date: 5 March 2014

Description: Erection of metal railings along the north-west boundary of the property and erection of a wrought iron electric gate.

Reference: B/05624/13

Address: Church End House, 44 Totteridge Village, London, N20 8PR

Decision: Withdrawn

Decision Date: 31 January 2014

Description: Erection of a green palisade fence along the north-west boundary of the property and erection of a wrought iron electric gate (Listed Building Consent).

Reference: N02147E/02/TRE_B

Address: Church End House, 44 Totteridge Village, London, N20 8PR

Decision: Approved subject to conditions

Decision Date: 18 April 2002

Description: Beech - remove 1 branch, thin 20% T19 of TPO

3. Proposal

The application relates to the creation of 12 car parking spaces and 16 cycle spaces to serve the church hall including alterations to hard and soft landscaping. Single storey side (east) extension to provide new entrance foyer to church hall. Alterations to existing access drive and creation of new turning head.

4. Public Consultation

Consultation letters were sent to 14 neighbouring properties.

46 responses have been received, comprising 4 letters of objection, 42 letters of support.

CAAC - no comment

The objections received can be summarised as follows:

No assessment of health and safety impact - cars and pedestrians sharing the same access which will be especially bad during bad weather/night time.

More cars exiting from church grounds and cross public path on a blind spot.

Car park is the same distance from church as Northcliffe Drive - therefore no advantage of car park to help those with mobility problems.

Concerns that when the car park is full cars will be exiting and entering at the same time.

There is no forecast of the additional annual income expected, nor the insurance cost for accidental injury from vehicles on the access driveway. However if there were ten additional bookings a year at £300 each, the increased income of £3,000 is only a small part of the forecast deficit of £27,000 for 2016.

6. Will there be a larger congregation at the Sunday 10.00 service? On Easter Day 2016 there was an attendance of 141 (including 24 children), and at a recent funeral in 2016, an attendance of 155. If the average attendance at the 10.00 service is around 60 on a normal Sunday, the existing car park facilities would be sufficient for larger attendances.

5. Planning Considerations

5.1 Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance

The determination of planning applications is made mindful of Central Government advice and the Local Plan for the area. It is recognised that Local Planning Authorities must determine applications in accordance with the statutory Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise, and that the planning system does not exist to protect the private interests of one person against another.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27 March 2012. This is a key part of the Governments reforms to make the planning system less complex and more accessible, and to promote sustainable growth.

The NPPF states that 'good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people'. The NPPF retains a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This applies unless any adverse impacts of a development would 'significantly and demonstrably' outweigh the benefits.

The Mayor's London Plan 2016

The London Development Plan is the overall strategic plan for London, and it sets out a fully integrated economic, environmental, transport and social framework for the development of the capital to 2050. It forms part of the development plan for Greater London and is recognised in the NPPF as part of the development plan.

The London Plan provides a unified framework for strategies that are designed to ensure that all Londoners benefit from sustainable improvements to their quality of life.

Barnet's Local Plan (2012)

Barnet's Local Plan is made up of a suite of documents including the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Documents. Both were adopted in September 2012.

- Relevant Core Strategy Policies: CS NPPF, CS1, CS5.
- Relevant Development Management Policies: DM01, DM02, DM06.

The Council's approach to development as set out in Policy DM01 is to minimise the impact on the local environment and to ensure that occupiers of new developments as well as neighbouring occupiers enjoy a high standard of amenity. Policy DM01 states that all development should represent high quality design and should be designed to allow for adequate daylight, sunlight, privacy and outlook for adjoining occupiers. Policy DM02 states that where appropriate, development will be expected to demonstrate compliance to minimum amenity standards and make a positive contribution to the Borough. The development standards set out in Policy DM02 are regarded as key for Barnet to deliver the highest standards of urban design.

Supplementary Planning Documents

Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (adopted April 2013)

- Provides detailed guidance that supplements policies in the adopted Local Plan, and sets out how sustainable development will be delivered in Barnet.
- Totteridge Conservation Area Character Appraisal Statment (adopted 2008).

5.2 Main issues for consideration

The main issues for consideration in this case are:

- Whether harm would be caused to the character and appearance of the existing building, the street scene and the wider locality and the Totteridge Conservation Area;
- Whether harm would be caused to the living conditions of neighbouring residents.
- Whether harm would be caused to the traffic and parking of the surrounding roads.

5.3 Assessment of proposals

The proposal includes four main elements:

1. The creation of 11 car parking spaces plus an additional dedicated disabled space for use by the church/church hall; the parking area will cover the majority of the open green 'garden area' with some soft landscaping along the boundaries. Each parking space measures 2.4m wide and 4.8m in length. 6m space has been maintained between car parking spaces which lie opposite each other to ensure suitable maneuverability between spaces. The parking spaces and access drive will be created with a permeable cellular grass reinforcement system
2. The construction of a new entrance foyer to the church hall; the extension will project 2m and have a width of 5.4m with sloping roof no higher than the existing building.
3. The re-aligning of the driveway at the southern edge of the application site and the creation of a new turning head at the end of the existing access drive. This is proposed so that the driveway is not hard up against the trunk of the Bhutan tree.
4. New cycle storage facilities on the front and side elevation of the church hall building including new cycle rack next to the proposed entrance extension.

Principle of Development

Impact on the Totteridge Conservation Area

The site is located within the Totteridge Conservation Area. Local Policies CS1, CS5 and DM6 aim to protect and enhance Barnet's heritage including conservation areas. The application site is highlighted within the Totteridge Character Appraisal as falling within Area 3: Totteridge Village. The Character Appraisal considers that St Andrew's Church together with the churchyard and lychgate, the cluster of surrounding buildings, ancient yew tree, small village green and war memorial and the cluster of noteworthy buildings around form a key location within the Totteridge Conservation Area.

The area has a semi-rural feel with significant tree planting. Trees, planting and green spaces make an important contribution to the open character and appearance of the conservation area.

Currently St Andrew's Church Hall is set in green surroundings. It is adjoined by the cemetery to the north; gardens of the surrounding residential properties adjoin the other boundaries. Access is gained via a narrow driveway and there is some hardsurfacing to the front of the building. The eastern side, where the new car park is proposed is a largely made up of grass with some trees and other planting. This gives the church hall a soft landscaped green setting, adding to the open, semi rural feel to the character of the conservation area.

The proposed car park would result in the loss of some of the trees and a significant part of the grassed area. With the exception of the disabled space which will be resin bound shingle, grasscrete is proposed for the car parking area, with the aim to reduce its impact and provide a "greener" setting for the parking area. However, the use of this current open space would still become a car park. Cars therefore would be parked on the area, which would detract from the current open green nature of the existing space and the setting of the church hall. The grasscrete and parking would introduce an uncharacteristic and incongruous development into this part of the Conservation Area, harming the semi-rural character to the area. Therefore it is considered that the use of the area as car parking would neither, preserve or enhance the character of the Totteridge Conservation Area. As such the development would be contrary to Policies CS5 and DM06.

It is considered that the use of grasscrete over such an extensive area which currently is open natural green space would harm the character of the conservation area. It is considered that the use of grasscrete would make it more difficult to resist similar forms of development in the Conservation Area, which would further lead to the erosion of the semi-rural character of this part of the conservation area. The loss of the natural landscaping would be detrimental to the character of the conservation area.

Policy CS7 also seeks to "maintain and improve the greening of the environment through the protection of incidental greenscape, trees... enabling green corridors to link Barnet's rural, urban fringe and urban green spaces" The current proposal would be in conflict with this policy, as it would result in the loss of greenscape.

It is stated within the application that the development is required as there is a need for additional parking due to a variety of events taking place in both the hall and church, such as services of worship, as well as events during the week held in the church hall. The justification provided is that cars are currently parked in the access road to the church hall, making it unsafe for elderly patrons and children, and the lack of parking means that many

people park in residential streets. The proposed development of 12 car parking spaces is proposed to alleviate these issues.

In regard to the proposal for 16 cycle spaces, no justification or explanation is provided or any indication given as to how many people currently cycle to the church or the hall and where they currently park their bikes at the moment.

It is argued that the provision of more convenient parking will support the community uses within the building and ensure that it remains a convenient, adequately resourced and valued facility within the parish.

Policy CS10 of the Core Strategy "supports the enhancement and inclusive design of community facilities ensuring their efficient use, and the provision of multi-purpose community hubs that can provide a range of services to the community at a single accessible location". It is accepted that the proposed car park would allow for easier parking and may take some parking from the surrounding roads and former vicarage frontage; making the use of the building more desirable for some. This however has to be balanced against the harm that would result on the impact on the Totteridge Conservation Area. There is no evidence that the use of the church hall would cease if the car park were not provided. As outlined above, whilst the car park would result in benefits to some users of the hall and surrounding properties, it is considered that these benefits would not outweigh the harm caused to the Totteridge Conservation Area by the proposal.

Impact of proposal on neighbouring properties

The nearest residential properties 7 and 9 Northcliffe Drive and 44 Totteridge Village which back on to the site. Each of these residential properties are sited some distance from the proposed car parking area and the church hall. The buildings of 7 and 9 Northcliffe Drive are sited approximately 43m and 44m respectively from the boundary with the proposed parking area. 44 Totteridge Village is approximately 19.5m from the boundary. As such each of these units are sited some distance from the are some residential properties adjoining the church hall site. The car park would result in some noise and general disturbance to these residential properties from the comings and goings to the car park. However on balance given that the car park would be largely located to the rear of these properties, which have substantial gardens, it is considered that any loss of residential amenities would not be so significant to warrant refusal of the scheme.

The New Entrance Foyer

It is considered that the new entrance foyer is of a design that would be a proportionate addition to the host building and would provide valuable disabled access into the building. In my view it would not detract from the character of the Conservation Area, and given it's size and location from boundaries would not result in a loss of amenities to neighbouring properties. A requirement of any future application however would be that the materials used would match those of the existing building.

Widening of access road

The proposed widening of the access road is considered to be acceptable, the trees team have raised no objection to this element of the proposal. It is not considered that this alteration will be harmful to the character of the Conservation Area or the site of which the access road forms a part.

Impact on Trees

As stated above given that the site is located within a conservation area, the trees benefit from protection by virtue of their location within the conservation area. The trees on the access way and some of the trees on the adjoining boundaries are also protected by Tree Preservation Orders.

The tree officer has reviewed the application and has made the following comments: -
The proposal requires the installation of no-dig surfaced car park on land to the east of the Church hall/rooms.

The adjustment of the access road will present the risk of vehicles parking off verge; therefore a suitable barrier will be needed to prevent this occurrence.

Although the loss of the trees may be acceptable due to poor health, in terms of the impact of this on the conservation area it is considered that the loss would erode the natural setting of the conservation area. It is therefore considered that a detailed landscaping plan would be required to off-set the loss of these trees to ensure that the site retains its semi-rural character. It is not considered that a reason for refusal on the basis of the loss of the trees would be sustainable at appeal and a landscaping plan to offset the loss could be secured by way of condition.

Highways

The additional parking provision would only create a minor increase in traffic movements on the A5109 and would not have a detrimental impact to the highway network. There is no highway objection to the proposals.

5.4 Response to Public Consultation

All planning related matters are considered to be covered in the above appraisal.
The funding of the proposal is not a planning related matter.

6. Equality and Diversity Issues

The proposal does not conflict with either Barnet Council's Equalities Policy or the commitments set in the Equality Scheme and supports the Council in meeting its statutory equality responsibilities.

7. Conclusion

The proposal is considered to fail to accord with the requirements of the Development Plan and is therefore recommended for refusal.

