

**Committee Report**  
**Planning Committee on 3 February, 2010**

Case No. 09/2588

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**RECEIVED:** 14 December, 2009

**WARD:** Harlesden

**PLANNING AREA:** Harlesden Consultative Forum

**LOCATION:** Beulah Apostolic Church, 130 Church Road, London, NW10 9NH

**PROPOSAL:** Proposed demolition of existing church building and erection of part single-, part two-storey replacement church building (as accompanied by Travel Plan, dated November 2009)

**APPLICANT:** Beulah Apostolic Church

**CONTACT:** Mr Collin Davis

**PLAN NO'S:** 130CR/P01, 130CR/P02, 130CR/P03, 130CR/P04, 130CR/P05, 130CR/P06, 130CR/LL01, 130CR/SK1, 130CR/SK2

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**RECOMMENDATION**

Grant planning permission subject to the completion of a satisfactory Section 106 or other legal agreement and delegate authority to the Director of Environmental Services to agree the exact terms thereof on advice from the Borough Solicitor

**SECTION 106 DETAILS**

The application requires a Section 106 Agreement, in order to secure the following benefits:-

- Implementation of a Travel Plan for the church. The Travel Plan shall be in full accordance with the TfL residential or workplace travel planning guidance.
- Membership and compliance with the "Considerate Contractors" scheme.
- Payment of the Council's legal and other professional costs in (a) preparing and completing the agreement and (b) monitoring and enforcing its performance.

And, to authorise the Director of Environment and Culture, or other duly authorised person, to refuse planning permission if the applicant has failed to demonstrate the ability to provide for the above terms and meet the policies of the Unitary Development Plan and Section 106 Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document by concluding an appropriate agreement.

**EXISTING**

The subject site, located towards the north-east of the junction between Church Road and Conley Road, consists of a triangular plot (0.042Ha) occupied by a single-storey church building. The existing building fronts both Church Road, a busy local distributor road, and Conley Road, a mainly residential local access road.

**PROPOSAL**

Proposed demolition of existing single-storey church building and erection of part single-, part two-storey replacement church building (as accompanied by Travel Plan, dated November 2009)

## HISTORY

There have been two recent planning applications for the erection of a new church building on the site. The first application (08/1151) sought outline planning permission for the erection of a two-storey church building. This application was refused for the following reasons.

*"The proposed two-storey church by reasons of its scale, layout and design would result in an intensification of the use leading to overspill of people into highways due to excessive building coverage of the site, limited outlook, privacy and daylight to the adjacent occupier at No 132 Church Road and increased traffic levels on the local streets to the detriment of the amenity of the residents nearby, contrary to policies H22 and CF14 of Unitary Development Plan 2004 and Supplementary Planning Guidance No 17."*

*"The proposed church by reasons of its design would result in a building which poorly relates to the street scene of Church Road providing poor architectural transition between two built forms and lack of articulated details on the front elevation without strong element allowing for sense of arrival leads to unacceptable increased bulk and scale introduced to streetscene contrary to BE2 and BE9 of Unitary Development Plan 2004"*

A second application (09/1581) was submitted seeking full planning permission for the erection of a part-single-, part two-storey church building. Whilst this application overcame some of the previous design concerns the application was withdrawn prior to determination, on the advice of Officers, to allow for more time to prepare a suitable Travel Plan for the site.

## POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

### London Borough of Brent Unitary Development Plan 2004

BE2	Townscape: Local Context & Character
BE3	Urban Structure: Space & Movement
BE5	Urban Clarity & Safety
BE6	Public Realm: Landscape Design
BE9	Architectural Quality
TRN4	Measures to Make Transport Impact Acceptable
TRN11	The London Cycle Network
TRN22	Parking Standards - Non-Residential Developments
CF14	Places of Worship

### Supplementary Planning Guidance 17:- Design Guide For New Development

## SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT

The proposal does not reach the threshold that would require the submission of a sustainability assessment.

## CONSULTATION

### External

Consultation letters, dated 17th December 2009, were sent to Ward Councillors and 42 neighbouring owner/occupiers. In response, four letters of objection have been received from local residents. The concerns raised include:-

- The proposal will result in increased levels of noise, dust and traffic disturbance to local residents.
- The proposal will increase local traffic congestion and exacerbate local on-street parking pressure to the detriment of pedestrians.
- The proposal will harm the outlook, daylight and privacy of neighbouring occupiers.
- The design of the proposed church would harm the character of the area.
- The proposals would result in an increase in crime as a result of the increased use.

Councillor Janice Long has commented on the application, highlighting some of the above concerns raised by the local residents. Councillor Long has commented that additional planting around the church would be beneficial.

## **Internal**

### Transportation

The Council's Transportation Unit have commented that the submitted Travel Plan should be secured by way of a s106 agreement to ensure that the development would have an acceptable impact on transportation in the local area.

### Environmental Health

The Council's Environmental Health Unit have raised no objection to the application but have suggested a number of conditions that could be applied if permission were granted. These relate to construction, general control over works, noise and site waste management.

### Metropolitan Police Crime Prevention Officer

Have raised no objection to the proposal.

## **REMARKS**

### **Background & the Proposal**

The Beulah Apostolic Church is currently accommodated within a single-storey building on a triangular site located towards the north of the junction between Church Road and Conley Road. The existing church building has an internal floorspace of approximately 218m<sup>2</sup> consisting of the main church hall, vestry, meeting room and kitchen. At present the church has 175 registered members, although non-members may also attend, and, whilst the building is also used for a variety of ad-hoc events, the current worship schedule is as follows:-

<b>Day</b>	<b>Type of Worship</b>
Tuesday	Evening prayer meeting (1.5 hours)
Thursday	Evening Bible studies (2 hours)
Friday	Evening youth meetings (2 hours)
Saturday	Women-only prayer (2 per month), Men-only prayer (2 per month)
Sunday	Two services (2 hours each), Sunday school (1.5 hours)

The proposal would involve the demolition of the existing single-storey church building and the erection of a new part single-, part two-storey church building on the site. The proposed church building would have a similar but slightly enlarged footprint of approximately 225m<sup>2</sup>. However, with the introduction of an additional-storey the total floorspace of the church would be increased to approximately 338m<sup>2</sup>. The ground floor of the proposed church would consist of the main church hall, the vestry, male and female changing facilities and other storage and toilet facilities. The first floor of the proposed church would consist of a function/dining room with toilet and storage facilities and an office. The applicants have stated that they intend to grow the current membership to a maximum of 200 within the next five years. This is considered reasonable as the proposed plans indicate seating for a congregation of 182 people, although there may be space to accommodate a slight increase.

Whilst, it is not envisaged that the proposed redevelopment of the church is likely to give rise to a significant increase in the number of registered members, given the improved/enlarged facilities that would be provided, it is likely that the redevelopment would encourage a more intensive use of the site. The likely impacts of the proposed use of the site are considered below.

## **Transportation Issues & the Travel Plan**

The subject site has frontages along both Church Road and Conley Road. Church Road is a busy local distributor road where on-street parking is provided through a limited number of pay-and-display spaces. Conley Road, a local access road, lies within controlled parking zone "HY" and is defined as being heavily parked. Controlled parking zone "HY" is operational from Monday to Friday between the hours of 08.30 and 16.30. Despite having Neasden tube station within walking distance and three bus routes available locally the public transport accessibility of the site is rated as fairly low (PTAL 2). A baseline travel survey has been carried out on the existing site which reveals that only 7% of the congregation (approximately 12 people) travel to the church by single-occupancy car and 14% either walk or cycle. However, at present 52% of respondents stated that car-sharing is their main mode of travel, despite 58.1% of the congregation living within 2 miles of the site. This survey gives a useful insight into how, without intervention, the transportation constraints of the site affect the travel choices of the congregation of the existing church. Given that a significant proportion of the congregation live within a relatively short distance of the church, it is considered that there is a realistic opportunity to increase the number of members arriving by more sustainable methods of transport.

In order to achieve this, the applicant has prepared a full 5-year Travel Plan which sets out key measures which aim to encourage attendees of the church to adopt more sustainable methods of transport when travelling to and from the proposed church. The content of the plan has been assessed for robustness and appropriateness using the Transport for London "ATTrBuTE" system and has passed with a score of 78/87. The Travel Plan sets out the following package of key measures to support sustainable travel.

- The provision of 11 cycle parking spaces and 3 motorcycle parking spaces.
- The provision of private cubicle shower and changing facilities for cyclists.
- The introduction of voluntary car parking stewards to ensure that any parking relating to the church is controlled.
- Promotion of the benefits of sustainable travel.
- The provision of sustainable travel information.

The Travel Plan also sets out a number of measurable targets which will be monitored and reviewed during the lifespan of the Travel Plan. The primary Travel Plan target is a reduction in the number of people driving alone to the church from the current level of 7% (12 people) to 4% (7 people) over a period of three years and then a further reduction to 2% (4 people) in five years' time. Other targets seek slight increases in the number of members who cycle, walk, car-share and use public transport to travel to the proposed church.

The Council's Transportation Engineers have inspected the submitted Travel Plan and have stated that they are satisfied that the measures set out in the plan would provide adequate mitigation against any additional pressure placed on local transport infrastructure as a result of the proposed development. However, they have stated that for the submitted Travel Plan to be fully enforceable that it should be secured by way of a s106 legal agreement. On balance, it is considered that subject to the satisfactory completion of such an agreement, the proposed development would not result in an unreasonable increase in traffic and parking congestion within the surrounding area.

In terms of pedestrian access, the layout of the building and main entrance has been designed to encourage attendees of the church to congregate towards Church Road where they will be less likely to cause disturbance to residents of Conley Road.

## **Impact On Residential Amenity**

The proposed church building consists of a two-storey element, with a dual-pitched roof which generally fronts Church Road and a single-storey element, with a part flat, part mono-pitched roof, which fronts Conley Road. Towards the north-east, the site adjoins 132 Church Road, a two-storey, end-of-terrace property which consists of a mini-cab office on the ground floor with a

self-contained flat at first-floor level. Towards the rear of 132 Church Road there are two habitable room windows at first floor level, one rear facing window to the main body of the property and one side facing window to the outrigger. The proposed church building would be set in from the joint boundary by 1.5m.

In terms of daylight, sunlight and outlook, the proposed church building has been designed so that the two-storey element would only project beyond the rear facing habitable room window by 0.75m and, with the centre of the window being approximately 3m from the flank of the proposed building, any impact would be minimal. The side facing habitable room window would face the flank wall of the single-storey element at a distance of 3.6m. The relationship between this window and the single-storey element of the church building would easily comply with the guidance contained in SPG17 in terms of daylight and sunlight and the applicant has also provide a drawing (130CR/SK1) to indicate that the impact on outlook would be reasonable. It should also be noted that this side-facing window current faces the existing single-storey church building, which is closer to the site boundary.

In terms of privacy, there are no windows to the proposed church building that would interfere with the habitable-room windows to 132 Church Road. However, there is an emergency escape external staircase to the flank wall of the building, facing 132 Church Road. Officers had suggested that the orientation of the staircase could be amended towards Church Road to remove any potential for a loss of privacy to occupants of 132 Church Road. The applicant has suggested that the relocation of the staircase would interfere with light to the ground-floor windows to the main church hall and has declined to change the scheme. On balance, Officers consider that, subject to a condition ensuring that the proposed staircase is only used for emergency purposes, the current location of the staircase would be unlikely to cause significant harm to the privacy of neighbouring occupiers.

It is noted that along Conley Road there are a number of existing residential properties although these are separated from the subject site by the width of the road (approximately 12.5m) to the south and by the rear yard of 132 Church Road (in excess of 12m) to the east. In terms of outlook, daylight, sunlight and privacy, it is considered that the relationship between the proposed development and the properties on Conley Road would comfortable comply with the guidance contained in SPG17 and impact would be minimal.

### **Urban Design & Impact On Local Character**

The existing church building, to be demolished, is a single-storey structure with a roughly L-shaped footprint and a dual-pitched (gable) slate roof. The building is finished externally with brickwork punctuated by a number of uPVC windows. In streetscene terms, the building lacks architectural quality and the scale of the building relates poorly to the surrounding area which is generally characterised by the two-storey terraced properties on Church Road and Conley Road.

As discussed above, the proposed church building would consist of both single- and two-storey elements. The two-storey element, which would front Church Road, respects the roof form of the neighbouring terraced properties improving the visual connection between the subject site and the wider streetscene. Towards Conley Road, the building reduces to a single-storey which gives the impression of subsidiarity along this frontage, respecting the orientation of the adjacent site (132 Church Road) where the building also fronts Church Road. As mentioned above, the footprint of the proposed building is not dissimilar to the existing church and the overall scale of the building is considered appropriate within the context of the surrounding area.

The proposed church building would be generally finished externally with brickwork and a slate roof, respecting the general design context of the surrounding buildings. The civic setting of the building as a place of worship is underpinned by decorative features such as cast stone copings, corbels and quoins. The proposed church windows will be of an ornamental style, a significant improvement on the existing building, which will add to the visual interest of the building.

Overall, in urban design terms, it is considered that the proposed church would be a well-considered and good-quality building that, whilst retaining a distinct identity as a place of worship, would subtly reference the context and character the surrounding area.

### **Landscaping**

At present there is an absence of soft-landscaping on the subject site. This is, in part, due to the limited external space around the building and the demand to use what space is available as an area for those attending the church to safely access the site. However, as part of the proposed development the applicant intends to introduce planters along the site boundaries which would act as a means to soften the appearance of the church and enhance the general streetscene.

### **Consideration of Objections**

The concerns of objectors relating to the impact of the proposed development on transportation, parking, residential amenity and the character of the surrounding area have been already been considered in the above report.

Concerns that the proposed development would give rise to an increase in crime have been discussed with a Crime Prevention Design Officer (CPDO) from the Metropolitan Police. The view of the CPDO is that the proposed development would be unlikely to give rise to an increase in crime within the locality and that, in fact, a more intensive use of the site would increase the chances of public intervention and improve visual surveillance, which could help reduce crime levels.

Concerns have been raised that the proposed development would give rise an a increase in noise disturbance to local residents, although it is unclear within what context these concerns are raised. Whilst it is acknowledged there will always be a level of disturbance associated with construction works, as Members will be aware this is not normally a material planning consideration. However, the applicant will be required, as part of the s106 agreement, to join and comply with the Considerate Contractors scheme and any operations on site will be subject to the statutory controls over works which can be enforced by the Council's Environmental Health Officers.

In terms of noise disturbance that would be associated with the operation of the church, as mentioned above, the layout of the church has been designed to orientate the congregation towards the Church Road frontage when entering and exiting the site to reduce the potential for disturbance to Conley Road residents. It is envisaged that the proposed church building would provide better sound-insulation than the existing building and therefore noise generated during times of worship would be less likely to be audible from Conley Road. A condition should be attached to any consent, ensuring that adequate sound-insulation is provided.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Grant Consent subject to Legal agreement

(1) The proposed development is in general accordance with policies contained in the:-

Brent Unitary Development Plan 2004  
Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance 17:- Design Guide For New  
Development  
Council's Supplementary Planning Document:- s106 Planning Obligations

Relevant policies in the Adopted Unitary Development Plan are those in the following chapters:-

Built Environment: in terms of the protection and enhancement of the environment  
Transport: in terms of sustainability, safety and servicing needs  
Community Facilities: in terms of meeting the demand for community services

**CONDITIONS/REASONS:**

- (1) The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning on the date of this permission.

Reason: To conform with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- (2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings and/or documents:-

- 130CR/P01
- 130CR/P02
- 130CR/P03
- 130CR/P04
- 130CR/P05
- 130CR/P06
- 130CR/LL01
- 130CR/SK1
- 130CR/SK2

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning

- (3) Details of materials for all external work, including samples, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before any work is commenced. The work shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory development which does not prejudice the amenity of the locality.

- (4) All designated areas shown on the approved plan (130CR/LL01) shall be suitably landscaped in accordance with a scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement of any works on the site. The approved landscaping work shall be completed prior to the occupation of the building. Any trees and shrubs planted in accordance with the landscaping scheme, which, within 5 years of planting, are removed, dying, seriously damaged or become diseased, shall be replaced in similar positions by trees and shrubs of similar species and size to those originally planted unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory standard of appearance and setting for the development and to ensure that the proposed development enhances the visual amenity of the locality.

- (5) Details of all fencing, walls, gateways and means of enclosure shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the development is completed and all fencing, walls, gateways and means of enclosure shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details prior to occupation.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenity and character of the locality.

- (6) Those doors, gates and stairways to the premises marked for escape purposes on the approved plans shall not be used for access to or exit from the premises, save in the event of an emergency, and shall be kept closed at all times.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of adjoining occupiers.

- (7) The premises shall be acoustically insulated prior to occupation so that no music, amplified sound or preaching/chanting is audible beyond the site boundary (Leq,5min shall be below 10dB (at 1/3 octaves 40Hz to 20kHz) at the nearest noise-sensitive premises).

Reason: To protect acoustic amenities within the locality.

**INFORMATIVES:**

- (1) The applicant is informed that the installation of any external building services equipment, such as extract ducts or air-conditioning units, would be likely to require a separate grant of planning permission.

**REFERENCE DOCUMENTS:**

London Borough of Brent Unitary Development Plan 2004  
Supplementary Planning Guidance 17:- Design Guide For New Development  
5 representations

Any person wishing to inspect the above papers should contact Ben Martin, The Planning Service, Brent House, 349 High Road, Wembley, Middlesex, HA9 6BZ, Tel. No. 020 8937 5231





# Planning Committee Map

Site address: Beulah Apostolic Church, 130 Church Road, London, NW10 9NH

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