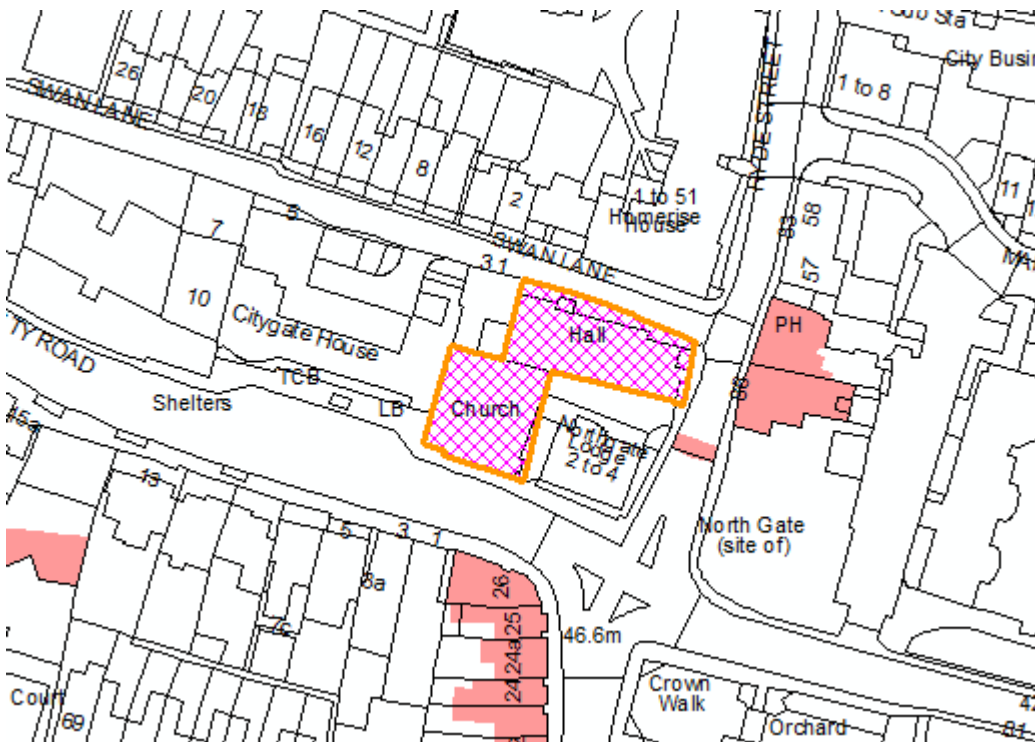


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Case No: 21/03224/FUL
Proposal Description: Erection of new first floor offices over existing single-storey flat roofed, lounge, kitchenette and WC's. Replacement of existing City Road entrance vestibule with 2-storey glazed entrance lobby. Erection of new lift shaft enclosure at rear of Sanctuary. Enclosure of existing Swan Lane entrance canopy to provide draught lobby to Church Hall, with glazed entrance doors and fanlight over.
Address: Winchester Baptist Church Swan Lane Winchester Hampshire SO23 7AA
Parish, or Ward if within Winchester City: St Bartholomew
Applicants Name: Mr David Evans
Case Officer: Mrs Megan Osborn
Date Valid: 17 December 2021
Recommendation: Application Refused
Pre Application Advice No

Link to Planning Documents

[Link to page – enter in reference number 21/03224/FUL](https://planningapps.winchester.gov.uk/online-applications/search.do?action=simple)
<https://planningapps.winchester.gov.uk/online-applications/search.do?action=simple>



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Reasons for Recommendation

The development is recommended for refusal as it is considered that the design and external appearance of the proposed two storey front extension would adversely affect the character of the Conservation Area by reason of its visual prominence within the City Road street scene resulting in an incongruous and awkward development.

General Comments

The application is reported to Committee because of the number of support representations, received contrary to the Officer's recommendation.

Amendments to Plans Negotiated

During the process of this application, the applicant has amended the scheme a number of times following officers concerns regarding the impact of the proposed front elevation on the street scene in relation to the impact on the Conservation Area.

The amended plans show a change in the design and a small reduction in the scale of the proposed extension.

Site Description

Winchester Baptist Church is prominently located on City Road, one of the main access roads into Winchester. This church is not listed but is located within the Winchester Conservation Area. The church is an imposing classically designed Victorian building, built in 1865. The original building makes a prominent, positive contribution to the Conservation Area and is classified as a designated heritage asset.

Proposal

It is proposed to demolish the existing entrance lobby and replace with a new two storey entrance lobby. Other alterations are proposed to the entrance area on Swan Lane, a new enclosure to house a new lift also on Swan Lane and a further extension to house the churches leadership team also on the Swan Lane elevation.

Relevant Planning History

78/00244/OLD - Erection of extension to provide meeting room, kitchen, toilets and new entrance. Permitted 16th March 1978.

90/00172/OLD - Demolition of hall and entrance block. Permitted 30th May 1990.

91/00152/OLD - Two storey link and new entrance block. Permitted 4th October 1991.

Consultations

Consultee:

Service Lead for Historic Environment

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Objection, there is an objection to the proposed lobby due to the less than substantial harm it would cause to the character and appearance of the conservation area by virtue of design and also harm to a positive building within the conservation area.

Representations:

City of Winchester Trust

Support – The proposal is well considered. A condition should be made that the details of the smooth metal cladding of the fin columns for the new entrance on to City Road that would adjoin the painted render of the existing building should be submitted.

6 Supporting Representations received from different addresses citing the following material planning reasons:

- It provides a light and welcoming space.
- Although this using contrasting architectural language, it provides much needed space.
- Would encourage more use of the Church facilities.

Relevant Government Planning Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework

Section 4 Decision making

Section 12 Achieving well-designed places

Section 16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

National Planning Practice Guidance

Consultation and pre-decision matters

Design: process and tools

Determining a planning application

Historic environment

Use of planning conditions

Winchester Local Plan Part 1 – Joint Core Strategy (LPP1). DS1 – Development Strategy and Principles

DS1 Development Strategy and Principles

CP13 High Quality Design

CP20 Heritage and Landscape Character

Winchester District Local Plan Part 2 – Development Management and Site Allocations

WIN1 Winchester Town

DM15 Local Distinctiveness

DM16 Site Design Criteria

DM17 Site Development Principles

DM27 Development in Conservation Areas

DM29 Heritage Assets

Supplementary Planning Document

National Design Guide 2019

High Quality Places 2015

Air Quality SPD September 2021

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Other relevant documents

Climate emergency declaration carbon neutrality action plan 2020 – 2030

Statement of Community Involvement 2018 and 2020

Historic England Guidance:

Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance 2008

Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 4 Published 30 June 2020

Enabling Development and Heritage Assets

Winchester Future 50 Conservation Area Project 2018-2020

Planning Considerations

Principle of development

Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and paragraph 47 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2021) requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Planning policy CP13 and CP20 of the Local Plan Part 1 (LPP1) states that development will be expected to meet the highest standards of design and conserve and enhance the Historic Environment. It is considered that this proposal fails to do this as it conflicts with the character of the existing building and the surrounding area.

This site is located within the development boundary of Winchester, under policy WIN1, planning permission will be granted for development which accords with the development plan and protects and enhances the special character of Winchester Town, including its setting, heritage assets and treed skylines.

In line with the above mentioned policy, the development should accord with the relevant policies in the Local Plan policy 2, DM15 (Local Distinctiveness), DM16 (Site Design Criteria), DM17 (Site Development Principles), DM27 (Development in Conservation Areas) and DM29 (Heritage Asset). It is considered that the proposed development does not accord with these policies for the reasons assessed in further detail within the report.

Assessment under 2017 EIA Regulations.

The development does not fall under Schedule I or Schedule II of the 2017 Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, therefore an Environmental Impact Assessment is not required.

Impact on character and appearance of area and Conservation Area

The development is situated within the Winchester Conservation Area. The following legislation and policies are taken into account in the assessment and determination of this planning and listed building application.

Relevant Legislation relating to Conservation areas:

The preservation of the special architectural/historic interest of the listed building and its setting (S.66 P(LBCA) Act 1990; Policy DM29 & DM30 of the Winchester District Local
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Plan Part 2 Adopted 2017; Policy CP20 Winchester District Joint Core Strategy; NPPF (2021) Section 16.

The preservation or enhancement of the character or appearance of the conservation area (S.72 P(LBCA) Act 1990; Policies DM27 & DM28 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 2 Adopted 2017; Policy CP20 Winchester District Joint Core Strategy; NPPF (2021) Section 16.

The preservation of a non-designated heritage asset (Policies DM29 & DM32 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 2 Adopted 2017; Policy CP20 Winchester District Joint Core Strategy; NPPF (2021) Section 16).

Winchester Baptist Church is an imposing classically designed Victorian building, built in 1865. It is unlisted but sits within Winchester Conservation Area. The original building makes a prominent and positive contribution to the surrounding designated heritage asset.

The proposal has a number of elements to it: Additions to the Swan Lane elevation, to the porch, an addition of a lift shaft and extension of the leadership team office. These additions are considered acceptable in relation to the impact on the character of the area and existing building due to the design and the location of these alterations to the rear of the building away from the principle elevation of the building.

The other element of the proposal is for the demolition of the existing single storey porch and replacement of this with a two storey porch in the same location.

The existing porch complements the original architecture of the building. There is no objection to the principle of an improved entrance area providing improved disabled access, and extra light to give a more welcoming approach into the building. This however is subject to appropriate design and detailing.

Whilst the amended design is a visual improvement compared to the first, there remains concerns about its visual impact to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The character of the street scene around the original church is of mainly historic buildings dating from the C19. The late C20 buildings do not contribute to the historic character or appearance of the conservation area, and the neighbouring building to the west (Citygate House) does not contain much design merit. The Design and Access Statement states that the design of the proposed entrance lobby responds more to the design and articulation of the Sanctuary than it does to the architectural characteristics of the other buildings on the City Road, or to those within the rest of the conservation area. On the contrary, the proposed entrance lobby does not respond at all to the design and articulation of the original church building, and instead appears to respond more to the neighbouring building to the west, which does not contribute at all to the positive attributes of the conservation area.

Whilst the Design and Access Statement says that the late C20 neighbouring building makes it arguably less visually sensitive to the potential impacts of any new building seen alongside it, this should nevertheless not give an excuse to create something that is also not sensitive to the conservation area. Any new addition should respect existing architecture which contributes positively, and aim to be beautifully designed in itself. This is not achieved here.

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Because the church sits forward of the buildings either side, the side elevations of the front part of the church are clearly visible from the street scene, and the architectural detailing can be clearly appreciated. Covering up one side as proposed would remove that appreciation, and although it could be argued that due to the glass, the original façade can be seen beyond, in reality, the glass provides a reflective quality, removing some of the clarity which the façade could be appreciated. Solid elements of the structure would interrupt visual appreciation further, covering up a portion of a building which contributes positively with an extension that would not. This would result in less than substantial harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

There also remain concerns about how the new extension and lobby would be detailed around the original architectural detailing. It would appear that the classical architectural detailing would need to be cut and chased into to form a watertight join between old and new, and it would also result in a certain level of covering over to allow for elements such as the thickness of roof insulation to be installed.

Officers have considered the potential impact of the proposal on the Conservation Area and representations received from the Council's Conservation Officer. Having considered all of the relevant facts and circumstances, and expert conservation advice, officers are of the opinion that the proposal will result in harm to the character of the Conservation Area and neither preserve or enhance the features of this heritage Asset for the reasons given above.

As such due regard has been given to Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which requires that "special attention should be given to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area".

Case law has established that where an authority finds that a development proposal would harm a Conservation Area and/or their setting, it must give that harm "considerable importance and weight".

The historic environment section of the Planning Practice Guidance further outlines the role of the Local Planning Authority in considering the effects of new development that are in the vicinity of or affect the setting of heritage assets.

Paragraph 199 of the NPPF advises that great weight should be given to the conservation of a heritage asset in considering the impact of a proposal on its significance (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. Paragraph 200 states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Policy CP20 of WDLPP1 and Policy DM29 of WDLPP2 ensure that development preserves and enhances heritage assets and their settings.

Annex 2 of the NPPF (2021) defines the setting of a heritage asset as:

"The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to

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appreciate that significance or may be neutral”.

The Historic Environment Officer objected to the proposed front lobby element of the application in that it would result in a detrimental impact on the surrounding conservation area and historic asset. This impact amounts to less than substantial harm.

Paragraph 202 of the NPPF advises that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

It is not considered that the public benefits of the proposed new front extension and lobby would outweigh the harm to the conservation area.

Conclusion

Overall, for the reasons set out above, it is considered that the proposed lobby would result in less than substantial harm to the character and appearance of the area and the conservation area by virtue of design and also harm to a positive building within the conservation area. Therefore this proposal would be contrary to policies CP13, CP20 of the LPP1 and DM15, DM16, DM17, DM 27 and DM29 of the LPP2.

Development affecting the South Downs National Park

Government policy relating to National Parks is set out in English National Parks and the Broads: UK Government Vision and Circular 2010 and The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) updated 2021.

The Circular and NPPF confirm that National Parks have the highest status of protection, and the NPPF states at paragraph 172 that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in national parks and that the conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations and should be given great weight in National Parks.

The application site is located 0.46km from the South Downs National Park within the built up centre of Winchester City. Therefore the development will not affect any land within the National Park, or the setting of the National Park, and is in accordance with Section 11a of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

Neighbouring amenity

This development would not result in any material planning harm on surrounding neighbouring amenities.

Therefore the proposal complies with policy DM17 of the Local Plan Part 2.

Equality

Due regard should be given to the Equality Act 2010: Public Sector Equality Duty. Public bodies need to consciously think about the three aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making. The weight given to the Equality Duty, compared to the other

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factors, will depend on how much that function affects discrimination, equality of opportunity and good relations and the extent of any disadvantage that needs to be addressed. The Local Planning Authority has given due regard to this duty and the considerations do not outweigh any matters in the exercise of our duty.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

It is considered that the design, mass and scale of the proposed front porch extension on the City Road elevation is unacceptable in relation to the character of the surrounding Conservation area and would be a detrimental form of development on the existing building which would result in less than substantial harm to the conservation area.

Therefore this proposal is contrary to planning policies CP13, and CP20 of the LPP1 and DM15, DM16, DM27 and DM29 of LPP2, and paragraphs 199, 200 and 202 of the NPPF.

Recommendation

Application Refused, subject to the following reason:

Reason:

The proposed porch on the front, City Road elevation of the Winchester Baptist Church is contrary to policies CP13 and CP20 of the LPP1 and DM15, DM16, DM17, DM27 and DM29 of the LPP2, paragraphs 199, 200 and 202 of the NPPF and Part 6 of the Winchester High Quality Places SPD in that the design, mass, scale and external appearance of the extension would adversely affect the character of the Conservation Area and the existing building by reason of its visual prominence within the City Road street scene resulting in an incongruous and awkward development.

Informatives

In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the NPPF Winchester City Council (WCC) take a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. WCC work with applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by;

- offering a pre-application advice service and,
- updating applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application and where possible suggesting solutions.

In this instance the applicant was updated of any issues after the initial site visit.

02. The Local Planning Authority has taken account of the following development plan policies and proposals:-

Local Plan Part 1 - Joint Core Strategy: DS1, CP13, CP20

Local Plan Part 2 - Joint Core Strategy: Development Management and Site Allocations: WIN1, DM15, DM16, DM17, DM27, DM29

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