

Agenda Item A6	Committee Date 8 January 2018	Application Number 17/01244/FUL
Application Site Church Hall St Luke's Church Shady Lane Hest Bank	Proposal Demolition of existing church hall and erection of replacement two storey church hall	
Name of Applicant Slyne-with-Hest Church Hall	Name of Agent HPA	
Decision Target Date 15 December 2017	Reason For Delay Committee cycle	
Case Officer	Mr Robert Clarke	
Departure	No	
Summary of Recommendation	Approval	

(i) Procedural Matters

This form of development would normally be dealt with under the Scheme of Delegation. However, it has been reported to the Planning Committee as an area of the development site, the section through which it is intended to site a path to the south of the church hall, is within the ownership of the City Council.

1.0 The Site and its Surroundings

- 1.1 The site that forms the subject of this application is the Church Hall adjacent to St. Luke's Church in Slyne. The existing church hall is situated to the south of the Grade II listed church. It was constructed in 1939 and is presently used by both St Luke's Church and Hest Bank United Reformed Church, as well as by various community groups. It is single storey in form and features a dual pitched roof, finished with grey render, grey roof tiles and timber windows. The site in which the building is located is well screened from Shady Lane to the west by a number of mature trees and hedging, some of which are covered by a Tree Protection Order. To the south of the hall is a detached block of garages and a grassed area (both within the ownership of the Council). A section of hedging to the southern elevation wraps around to the rear of the hall and runs along the eastern boundary.
- 1.2 Vehicular access to the site is from Shady Lane to the west, and serves a car park located in front of the hall. There is an unofficial footpath located across the grassed area to the south of the hall, linking the hall to the surrounding residential properties to the east and south. To the east, and set at a lower level (600mm) than the church hall site, are a number of Council owned bungalows.
- 1.3 St. Luke's Church is a Grade II listed building, whilst the surrounding church yard is identified in the Council's open space audit as a churchyard. A number of trees within the grounds of the church are subjected to Tree Protection Orders.

2.0 The Proposal

- 2.1 This application seeks consent for the demolition of the existing church hall and construction of a replacement church hall building. The new church hall would be used in the same manner as the existing hall, with the exception of a 'café' space, which would be ancillary to the use of the church hall and not run as an independent café.
- 2.2 The proposed replacement church hall will occupy the same location within the site as the existing structure. It will feature a maximum depth of 26m and a maximum width of 13.7m. The pitched roof of the property will have a maximum height of 6.2m to the front elevation and 7.3m to the rear due to differences in land levels within the site. The structure is 1.5 storey in height and benefits from a mezzanine level within the central apex of the roof structure. The building will be finished with rendered elevations, grey aluminium windows and doors, a timber support post to the front elevation canopy and red clay tiles to the roof along with a number of roof lights and solar panels to the southern elevation.
- 2.3 Vehicular access to the site will remain as existing onto Shady Lane. However, as part of the redevelopment of the site, a new tarmac footpath is proposed to the grassed area to the south of the hall. This path will regularise the existing unofficial footpath and will serve to link the Church Hall to the residential properties to the east and south.
- 2.4 As part of the development 5 trees and a hedge located along the eastern and southern boundaries of the site are to be removed to facilitate the new church hall.

3.0 Site History

- 3.1 There is no planning history relating to this site.

4.0 Consultation Responses

- 4.1 The following responses have been received from statutory and non-statutory consultees:

Consultee	Response
Parish Council	No objection
Conservation Section	No objection subject to conditions
Tree Protection Officer	No objection subject to conditions
County Highways	No objection subject to conditions
Environmental Health	No response during the statutory consultation period

5.0 Neighbour Representations

- 5.1 One letter of support has been received stating that the development will benefit the village and will appear in keeping with the neighbouring church.

Three further letters have also been received in support of the principle of the replacement of the existing church hall, but have some concerns about the design and scale of the proposal in the setting of the listed church, the impact on surrounding trees and the parking provision in light of the 'café' use.

6.0 Principal National and Development Plan Policies

- 6.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Paragraph 14 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
Paragraph 17 – 12 Core Principles
Paragraph 32 – Requiring safe and suitable access to the site
Paragraphs 56 and 57 – Requiring Good Design

6.2 Local Planning Policy Overview – Current Position

At the 20 December 2017 meeting of its Full Council, the local authority resolved to publish the following 2 Development Plan Documents (DPD) for submission to the Planning Inspectorate:

- (i) The Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD; and,
- (ii) A Review of the Development Management DPD.

This enables progress to be made on the preparation of a Local Plan for the Lancaster District. The DPDs will be published in February, after which there will be a 6 week period for representations prior to the submission of the documents to the Planning Inspectorate for independent Examination. If an Inspector finds that the submitted DPDs have been soundly prepared they may be adopted by the Council, potentially in late 2018.

The **Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD** will replace the remaining policies of the Lancaster District Core Strategy (2008) and the residual ‘saved’ land allocation policies from the 2004 District Local Plan. Following the Council resolution in December 2017, it is considered that the Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD is a material consideration in decision-making, although with limited weight. The weight attributed to this DPD will increase as the plan’s preparation progresses through the stages described above.

The **Review of the Development Management DPD** updates the policies that are contained within the current document, which was adopted in December 2014. As it is part of the development plan the current document is already material in terms of decision-making. Where any policies in the draft ‘Review’ document are different from those adopted in 2014, and those policies materially affect the consideration of the planning application, then these will be taken into account during decision-making, although again with limited weight. The weight attributed to the revised policies in the ‘Review’ will increase as the plan’s preparation progresses through the stages described above.

6.3 Development Management DPD

- DM22** – Vehicle Parking Provision
- DM27** – Protection and enhancement of Biodiversity
- DM29** – Protection of Trees, Hedgerows & Woodland
- DM32** – The Setting of Designated Heritage Assets
- DM35** – Key Design Principles
- DM49** – Local Services

6.4 Lancaster District Core Strategy

- SC1** - Sustainable Development

7.0 Comment and Analysis

7.1 The key considerations arising from the proposal are:

- Principle of development;
- General design and impacts upon the setting of St. Luke’s Church;
- Impacts upon residential amenity;
- Impacts upon trees and protected species; and
- Highway implications and parking provision

7.2 Principle of development

7.2.1 The church hall use (D1 use class) has been established on this site since the construction of the existing church hall in 1939 and provides a valued community facility to the surrounding residents. Given the established use of the site, the proposal to continue this use is acceptable and will serve to retain this community facility in line with Policy DM49. The new church hall also includes a ‘café’ space, though this is to be an ancillary use to the principal D1 church hall use to facilitate church

hall activities rather than it being an independent A3 café use. It is considered a condition restricting the café use to remain as an ancillary use is appropriate as a separate and additional use on this site would result in additional pressures upon the use of the site, such as parking, which would be considered inappropriate.

7.2.2 The existing building is in a poor state of repair and would require substantial and costly renovation works if this structure was to be retained. Renovation and redevelopment of the existing building would also by its nature be significantly restricted by the existing fabric of the structure. Demolition and construction of a replacement church hall is considered a more cost effective method that will provide an improved solution for the end use. Given the poor state of the existing structure and its dated and non-descript character its removal and replacement is supported. However, given the communal value that is attached to this building, a condition requiring a photographic survey to be undertaken prior to its demolition is recommended.

7.3 General design and impacts upon the setting of St. Luke's Church

7.3.1 In accordance with the Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act, when considering any application that affects a Listed building, a Conservation Area or their setting, the local planning authority must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the heritage asset or its setting. This is reiterated by policies DM30, DM31 and DM32.

7.3.2 The setting of St Luke's Church is principally created by its location within the church yard, which is enclosed by large mature trees and consists of consecrated lawns. The trees which surround both the church and church hall provide a natural separation barrier to the surrounding residential built form. The ground level of the church hall is set at a higher level than that of the church, an unusual relationship for a church and church hall building but is likely to be a result of the slightly undulating topography of the site and to ensure that the adjacent consecrated lawn remained undisturbed. Outside of this immediate setting, the development site is located adjacent to the Manor Lane 1950s housing development, which is characterised by semi-detached rendered houses and areas of green space. Larger detached residential properties are located along Shady Lane which benefit from substantial trees lining the highway.

7.3.3 The proposed replacement hall is sited in the same location as the existing structure within the site and takes on the same rectangular form, though its footprint is larger and its ridge is 0.4m higher than that of the existing building. Despite the increased scale, the proposed abstract roof arrangement (including the incorporation of a flat roof profile to the highest section) and reduced eaves height ensures that the roof does not exceed the eaves of the squat church tower whilst the eaves of the hall do not exceed those of the nave of the church. Combined with the separation distance between the two structures this form is considered to ensure that the structure appears subservient to the adjacent church despite the increase in land levels within the site.

7.3.4 The contemporary design of the proposed replacement church hall is considered acceptable. The use of a nonstandard roof arrangement combined with larger sections of glazing with dark aluminium frames ensure that the structure does not aim to replicate the historic character of the adjacent church but seeks to maintain visual differentiation between the heritage asset and the modern addition. The use of overhangs to the eaves and canopied areas to the front elevation add definition whilst the fenestration, particularly to the front elevation, contributes to the architectural interest of the building. The proposed contemporary design approach is supported by the Conservation Officer.

7.3.5 The initial application proposed the use of a lightly coloured render (K-Rend Buttermilk) to the external elevations. Although the use of render is considered acceptable, the use of a lighter coloured finish was considered to jar with the sandstone construction of the adjacent church. After discussions with both the Conservation Officer and the agent, it has been agreed that a sample panel of the render finish shall be agreed on site prior to commencement. The use of red clay plain roof tiles to match those of the church will ensure that the new hall appears as a coherent addition within the setting of the church. Some concern was raised with regards to the number of roof lights proposed, particularly to the northern elevation facing the church. These have now been reduced in number, whilst they will be located lower down the roof slope and will be required to be recessed within the roof so as to sit flush with the roof tiles. The Conservation Officer is satisfied with this detail. No concern has been raised with regards to the use of solar panels to the southern elevation given these will not be seen within the setting of the church. In addition to the condition requiring a

sample of render to be agreed, a condition requiring agreement of the samples/details prior to commencement of the new build is recommended.

7.3.6 The replacement church hall building will be set back from the entrance to the site on Shady Lane by some 23m. This length of highway is framed by a number of substantial trees that provide excellent screening to the development site. Views of the structure will be prevented along Shady Lane by this tree line and will only be available from the driveway of the site itself. The proposed building will be more visible from the west along Manor Drive and Manor Lane. Given that built form has been established on this site since 1939 the presence of the new building on this site is considered not to be injurious to the surrounding street scene despite the removal of the number of trees within the site. Views of the replacement building and church together will be available from Manor Lane when travelling in a westerly direction. From this perspective the listed church building is framed by the large Scots Pine trees which are to be retained, this forms the principal setting of the church from this location. The proposed building is located to the south of the church and out of sight of this principal setting. The siting of the church within the development site is therefore supported.

7.4 Impact upon residential amenity

7.4.1 The proposed church hall will be located 1.5m away from the eastern boundary of the site, whilst the trees and hedging which currently form this boundary are to be removed to facilitate the development. Careful consideration has been given to the possible impacts that the increased scale and proximity to the Manor Lane bungalows to the east may have upon the amenity of these residents. At present a minimum separation distance of 4.2m is retained between the church hall and neighbouring property whilst the planting along this boundary forms an effective screen.

7.4.2 The proposed development will reduce the minimum separation distance between these buildings to 3m. Despite this reduced separation distance, regard has been given to the roof form of the replacement structure. The highest section of the roof and the eaves to the northern elevation are only 0.4m higher than those of the existing structure whilst the eaves to the southern elevation are 0.2m lower. The central flat roof section is aligned with the ridge of the adjacent dwelling. Although 2.3m higher than the adjacent dwelling, the increase in height of 0.4m and reduced separation distance is considered to have an acceptable relationship with the Manor Lane bungalows. Particular regard has also been given to the use of the space located to the side of No. 21, which is used as access to the large shared rear garden and as an area for bin storage. The siting of the church hall in line with the orientation of the Manor Lane bungalows (No. 21-25) will ensure that the development will not impact upon the enjoyment of the shared rear garden space. Furthermore, although the existing hedging and trees are to be removed (due to poor health and to facilitate the development) it is proposed to replace the lost hedge so as to soften the boundary between these sites. This hedge will be accompanied by a 1.8m high close boarded fence. The details of the replacement hedge will be submitted as part of a landscaping scheme for the site to be required by condition. Furthermore, there are no windows within the western gable end of No. 21 Manor Lane. As such the location of the replacement church will not impact upon existing daylight levels that the occupants of this property currently enjoy.

7.4.3 The southern elevation of the existing church hall is enclosed by a substantial and overgrown hedge, which wraps around the southern and eastern boundaries of the site. This hedge is also to be removed to facilitate the building and so that the path linking the church hall to the Manor Lane residential area can be implemented. There are two large sections of glazing to the southern elevation of the building serving the hall and these windows will face the side/rear garden of No. 6 Manor Close. This property effectively occupies a corner plot between Manor Close and a public footpath that leads to Manor Drive. Views of the side garden area of this property are already achieved from this public footpath. Views of the more private rear garden area are obscured by a detached outbuilding located within the garden of this dwelling. Given the views achieved from the existing public footpath it is considered that the southern elevation windows of the hall will not increase present levels of overlooking.

7.4.5 The newly formed footpath to the south of the building will serve to link the church hall to the local community. Given that this path will replace an existing informal short cut and will link to an existing footpath that links Manor Close and Manor Drive, its implementation and use is considered not to reduce existing levels of residential amenity for the adjacent dwellings.

7.5 Impacts upon trees and protected species

7.5.1 As set out within the previous sections, the church hall development site is enclosed by a number of large mature trees and hedging. A total of 8 individual trees 1 hedgerow and a single group of woody shrubs have been identified in relation to the development. 5 trees, including 3 sycamores, 1 elm and 1 cherry are all proposed for removal. 2 are in poor overall condition and require removal regardless of the proposed development. 3 trees are semi-mature or early mature trees, the loss of which can be mitigated in the medium term with replacement planting. They are categorised as being in fair condition and as such should not influence the development. The hedgerow is also proposed for removal, which is the eastern boundary hedge that whilst generally unsuitable for retention does provide an element of greening and partial screening between the church hall and No. 21 Manor Lane. The Tree Officer has no objection to the removal of the identified trees and hedgerow, subject to a condition requiring replacement planting at a ratio of 3:1, which is recommended. The remaining on-site trees will not be impacted upon by the proposed development and will be protected by the tree protection measures identified within the submitted Arboricultural Implications Assessment.

7.5.2 As the existing church hall building is to be demolished and given the presence of substantial tree coverage within and in close proximity to the site, a bat survey, including an emergence survey, has been undertaken. The survey concluded that the surrounding environment offers low-moderate potential for foraging. The survey found no past or current evidence of bats using the existing church hall building, although it was concluded that there is a possibility of opportunistic use by low numbers of bats at some times of the year. The level of use is considered not to be significant and with precautionary mitigation, a significant disturbance and/or the loss of roost sites is unlikely to occur.

7.6 Highway implications and parking provision

7.6.1 The replacement church hall will utilise the existing vehicular access point onto Shady Lane. The Highway Authority has raised no objections to the proposed development, but has requested that consideration be given to a number of conditions. The first condition relates to the lowering of hedging along the highway boundary with Shady Lane to 1m in height. The hedging to which this relates is not located within the development site itself and is not within the ownership of the applicants. A condition has also been requested requiring the access to the site to be increased in width to 5.5m to allow greater manoeuvrability when accessing and egressing the site as well as a condition requiring the access to be finished in a porous tarmac material. These conditions are not recommended as this site already has an established D1 church hall use. The erection of a replacement church hall building to continue this facility into the future is considered not to significantly increase the use of the access, especially as the car park will not be increased in size. In addition to this, the widening of the access would require the relocation of two retaining walls on each side of the driveway, and this could not be undertaken without implicating the root systems of the immediately adjacent protected trees. With regards to the requirement of a tarmac surface, it is recognised that the access and car park already benefits from hardstanding. Therefore it is recommended that the aforementioned conditions are not imposed if Members are minded to grant approval. Furthermore, it is concluded that these conditions would result in harm to the surrounding protected trees, reduce the presence of boundary hedging and result in a wider more prominent access point. This would ultimately result in the erosion of the wooded and green character of the wider street scene, which contributes to the setting of the listed church. It would also increase the visibility of the church hall building within this setting.

7.6.2 Although of a larger footprint, the construction of the replacement church hall will not reduce existing levels of parking provision. In total 5 spaces will be provided whilst acceptable manoeuvrability within the site, to allow for access and egress in a forwards gear, will be provided. It is also acknowledged that on street parking would be available on Shady Lane and on Manor Lane, which are largely unrestricted. The existing on site bicycle stands will be relocated to the redeveloped grassed area to the south of the building.

8.0 Planning Obligations

8.1 There are no planning obligations to consider as part of this application.

9.0 Conclusions

- 9.1 The church hall use (D1) has been established on this site since the construction of the existing church hall in 1939. The replacement of the existing nondescript building, that is in a poor state of repair, to allow this community facility to continue into the future is supported. The replacement structure is contemporary in design approach, which serves to create a distinction between the historic significance of the adjacent listed church and this modern addition. Through the use of appropriate materials, principally red clay roof tiles, a visual link between the church and associated church hall is still retained. The proposal is larger in form than the existing structure, but the abstract roof arrangement is considered to reduce the increased pressure upon the eastern boundary of the site. Replacement planting to mitigate the loss of the trees and hedge to be removed will ultimately soften the appearance of this structure and shared boundaries in the medium term. The windows to the southern elevation of the structure do not increase existing levels of overlooking given the open and exposed nature of the neighbouring private garden spaces. The conditions requested by the Highway Authority are not recommended as the existing use and vehicular access are established on this site, whilst the works requested would ultimately lead to harm to the character of the surrounding street scene.

Recommendation

That Planning Permission **BE GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. Standard three year timescale
2. Development in accordance with the approved plans
3. Submission of a photographic survey of existing church hall prior to demolition
4. Details, finishes and samples of materials, including aluminium windows and doors (including recesses), render panel, roof tile, ridge tile, rooflights (including dimensions), fascia/eaves/verges, rainwater goods, underside of overhangs/canopy and timber support post
5. Submission and agreement of all replacement planting/landscaping
6. Development in accordance with the submitted Arboricultural Implications Assessment, including tree protection measures
7. Implementation of protected species mitigation measures
8. Provision of vehicle parking spaces and bicycle stands
9. The café/catering facilities shall not be operated as an independent A3 use

Article 35, Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015

In accordance with the above legislation, Lancaster City Council has made the recommendation in a positive and proactive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development, working proactively with the applicant to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. The recommendation has been made having had regard to the impact of development, and in particular to the relevant policies contained in the Development Plan, as presented in full in the officer report, and to all relevant material planning considerations, including the National Planning Policy Framework, National Planning Practice Guidance and relevant Supplementary Planning Documents/ Guidance.

Background Papers

None