

LANSDOWN HOUSE
WALBERTON
ARUNDEL
WEST SUSSEX
BN18 OPG



Planning Department,
Arun District Council,
Arun Civic Centre,
Maltravers Road,
Littlehampton,
BN17 5LF

16 June 2019

Dear Sir,

**Application WA/44/19/PL. Walberton Baptist Church The Street
Walberton BN18 OPG. Temporary permission (maximum 12 months) for
a single storey timber framed WC & lobby extension**

My wife and I are the owners of Lansdown House the property immediately to the west of Walberton Baptist Church. I shall be grateful if you will register this letter as an objection to the above application.

Mrs Coney has already confirmed that this retrospective application will be considered against the same criteria and policies as all applications for planning permission. Whilst the application seeks planning permission for just one year, the Design and Access Statement confirms that it is until the Church can raise funds to build the approved extension. The applicants also confirm that they do not have the funds to build the extension and have provided no evidence on how they propose to raise funds and what their timescale will be. As such there is every chance that the extension would become permanent.

The extension, which already exists, comprises a poorly designed, utilitarian and unsightly timber structure with cedar brown walls, white UPVC openings and flat felt roof. The extension is attached to the side of the Baptist Church and projects close to the side wall of Lansdown House. Both of these properties are described as being Structures of Special Character in Schedule 5 of Walberton Neighbourhood Development Plan (WNDP). They make a significant contribution to the character, appearance and significance of the Walberton Conservation Area.

The extension is currently hidden behind the existing front wall and gate of the site. The view from The Street was blocked off during the construction of the extension. The gate will however be removed to provide access to the front entrance to the extension. As a consequence, the extension will be clearly visible from the street scene, where it will have a harmful and degrading impact on the street scene, the setting of the Baptist Church and Lansdown House and the character, appearance and significance of the Walberton Conservation Area. One only has to read the comments made by the Council's heritage officer in relation to other proposals along The Street to appreciate this.

The care taken by Arun DC and the Parish in dealing with proposals in the Conservation Area reflects their commitment to preserving and enhancing its character and appearance. Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (LBCA Act) requires that when assessing proposals for new development within a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing its character or appearance.

It is also reflected in Arun's newly adopted Local Plan policies.

Policy HER SP1 states that permission will be granted for proposals that conserve or enhance the historic environment. Policy HER DM3 requires new development to acknowledge the special character of the special environment of conservation areas, in their layout, form, scale, detailing, use of materials, enclosure and the spaces created between buildings. It encourages the removal of unsympathetic features. Extensions should emphasise the features and qualities of the existing buildings.

Together policies D SP1 and D DM1 seek to achieve high quality design and development which improves the character of the area.

At local level policy VE4 of the WNDP states that proposals that adversely affect the setting of the Conservation Areas will not be supported and policy VE5 confirms that development proposals relating to Buildings and Structures of Special Character will be expected to retain their local distinctiveness.

These policies are all consistent with the more recent National Planning Policy Framework 2019 which states that when considering the impact of a development on the significance of a designated heritage asset great weight should be given to its conservation. Any harm requires clear and convincing justification, whilst opportunities for new development in conservation areas should be sought.

Regarding new development in general it states that new development should be sympathetic to local character and history, maintain a strong sense of place, be visually attractive as a result of good architecture and add to the overall quality of an area.

Given the totally insensitive and unsightly design and appearance of the extension it clearly fails to comply with all of the above policies and Section 72 of the LBCA Act. To approve the proposal would not only be totally contrary to policy and practice at all levels, it would set a precedent for degrading and substandard additions to other locally important public and private buildings within the Walberton Conservation Areas and elsewhere in the District. As reinforced in planning guidance planning decisions need to be consistent to be credible.

To make matters worse a small and awkward gap has been left between the side wall of the extension and the historic side wall to Lansdown House. This is inaccessible; it will result in problems of damp and the accumulation of debris and rubbish with all of which it will be impossible to deal adequately. Visually this will add to the degrading appearance of the extension and could well have a materially adverse impact on the condition of the side wall to Lansdown House.

In addition, it has not been demonstrated that the extension will be adequately drained both in relation to surface and foul drainage. Without suitable drainage

the extension has the potential to have a materially adverse impact on the condition and thus the character and appearance of Lansdown House.

Both WA/54/17/PL and the present application provide for the removal of the existing locked gate referred to above. However WA/54/17/PL relates to a larger brick built building coming nearer to The Street and therefore leaving only a small unbuilt area in front. This extension, once the gate is removed, will leave a much longer 'alley' leading to a 'shed' - attractive to those wishing to loiter, for whatever purpose, or to gain illicit entry to the Church or our building.

Finally, ownership of the site. The Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches Ltd (FIEC) is the owner of the freehold interest of the Church; its title is registered at HM Land Registry under title number WSX204848. The Certificate A completed on this application and those certificates on the applications leading to WA/54/17 PL and WA/40/18/DOC would appear therefore perhaps not to be correct?

