
APPLICATION REFERRED FROM THE WEEKLY LIST**WEEKLY LIST NO. 1574 – 28 May 2021****21/00261/FUL****RAYLEIGH BAPTIST CHURCH, HIGH STREET, RAYLEIGH****CONSTRUCT TWO STOREY SIDE EXTENSION, LIFT
SHAFT AND INTERNAL ALTERATIONS. CONSTRUCT
MEZZANINE INSIDE MAIN HALL. DEMOLISH PART OF
STORAGE BUILDING.****1 DETAILS OF REFERRAL**

- 1.1 This item was referred from Weekly List No. 1574 requiring notification to the Corporate Services Officers by 1.00 pm on Wednesday, 2 June 2021 with any applications being referred to this meeting of the Committee.
- 1.2 Cllr A H Eves referred this item on the grounds that the extension was noted in the report as being large, and would not consider this to be large. No historical elements of the existing building are proposed to be altered. Difficult to say will adversely affect the street scene given that only a small flank of extension will be visible from the public highway and a three-storey building has recently been built adjacent to historical building which arguably affects the street scene more. The proposal will improve the extension that was built previously. The function of the church will improve as a result of the application being approved.
- 1.3 The item that was referred is attached at appendix 1 as it appeared in the Weekly List.
- 1.4 A plan showing the application site is attached at appendix 2.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

To determine the application, having considered all the evidence.

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Application No : 21/00261/FUL Zoning : TOWN CENTRE

Case Officer Ms Katie Fowler

Parish : Rayleigh Town Council

Ward : Wheatley

Location : Rayleigh Baptist Church High Street Rayleigh

Proposal : Construct Two storey side extension, lift shaft and internal alterations. Construct mezzanine inside main hall. Demolish part of storage building.

SITE AND PROPOSAL

1. The application site is located on the eastern side of the High Street. The use of the street within the vicinity of the site is mixed; to the north is Rayleigh High Street which is predominantly commercial and to the south is the residential area of Rayleigh. The application site and adjacent buildings therefore vary in uses of commercial and residential. The appearance of the street remains that of a town centre with the building line to the street contributing to the urban character of the street scene.
2. Rayleigh Baptist Church is a Grade II listed building of 19th century origin. The building adjacent to the Church, which was previously a school building and is now known as The Base, also dates from the 19th century and is considered to be curtilage listed.
3. The proposal involves the construction of a two storey side extension. The two-storey side extension would have a flat roof and would project from the southern side elevation of the hall, meaning it would be visible from the street. The extension would project to adjoin the rear portion of the Church. Part of the existing storage building would need to be demolished to facilitate this. The proposal also involves the construction of a mezzanine inside the main hall, a lift shaft and internal alterations.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Application No. 92/00610/LBC and 92/00609/FUL – demolish existing timber shed and erect single storey extensions to Baptist Hall to include lounge, classrooms, store and internal alterations – Permitted.

Application No.10/00259/FUL – internal alterations to walls and doors. Provision of new storage platform in hall. Provision of 1no. new window and 1no. new door to convert existing store room to meeting room. Provision of 1no. new toilet. Replace ramp with new raised platform – Permitted.

Application No. 15/00239/FUL – development of the church to include demolition, extension, alteration and refurbishment. External alterations to the drop off area, terrace and new canopy, demolition of the base building and erection of a new base building, creation of reception – Permitted.

Application No. 20/00527/LBC – replace 3 sash windows – Permitted.

MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

4. The proposed development must be assessed against relevant planning policy and with regard to any other material planning considerations. In determining this application, regard must be had to section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which requires proposals to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
5. The relevant parts of the adopted Development Plan are the Rochford District Core Strategy (2011), the Allocations Plan (2014) and the Development Management Plan (2014).

Principle of the Development

6. Paragraph 130 of the NPPF goes on to state that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area. Policy DM1 of the Development Management Plan requires that proposals encourage visual amenity and have a positive relationship with nearby buildings and a scale and form appropriate to the locality.
7. As a curtilage listed building of a Grade II Listed Building, the host property is a designated heritage asset as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). The main consideration in the determination of this application is whether the proposed extensions and alterations would preserve the character and appearance of the building and any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.
8. Paragraph 193 of the NPPF confirms when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset,

great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (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 195 of the NPPF states that where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss. Paragraph 196 of the NPPF states 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.

Impact on Built Heritage

9. Specialist advice has been sought from Essex County Council's (Place Services) Listed Building Officer. The officer raised objection to the prominence of the side extension given the height above that of the existing building, considering that the extension would fail to preserve the architectural interest of the curtilage listed building. Subsequently, the officer requested revisions; the revisions reduced the height of the lift shaft.
10. Albeit the revised plans are considered an improvement from the previous plans, the Built Heritage officer still considers the two-storey side extension to create a large new entrance upon the modestly proportioned curtilage listed building.
11. The proposed extension is considered to form an awkward appearance that would exacerbate the impact of the existing poor modern additions to the rear and would infill the existing break in built form as viewed from the street scene. As such, the extension would be considered to result in an overly dominant addition which would fail to preserve the setting of the Church and curtilage listed building.
12. No objection is raised to the internal alterations as they would only impact modern fabric and therefore any subsequent application should seek to address the impact of the massing that the listed building officer has raised. Furthermore, it has been established that listed building consent is not required for works at the Old School Hall (the Base) due to the ecclesiastical exemption.
13. The proposed two-storey side extension would be considered an unsympathetic addition to the curtilage listed building which would be considered to accrue a degree of harm that is less than substantial. The proposed development would be contrary to Section 16 of the NPPF and part (viii) of Policy DM1 of the Development Management Plan.

Impact on Character

14. The application site is located within Rayleigh Town Centre but south of the Conservation Area and primary shopping frontage. Much of Rayleigh High Street has been replaced with modernist 1960s additions which has eroded the market town context of the High Street. The buildings adjacent to the application site have maintained a traditional appearance for a market town and together form a positive contribution to the street scene.
15. Given the positioning and siting of the two-storey side extension, it would be visible from the street scene. The extension would have a flat roof, the eaves height of which would be greater than the existing two-storey flat roof modern extension. The front elevation of the side extension would have a large glazed feature which would draw attention to the extension from the public realm. The mezzanine entrance with signage reading 'THE BASE' is proposed to the south flank elevation. The external materials of the extension are proposed as brickwork, blue render, grey slate tiles and vertical timber cladding.
16. Albeit the building encompasses an existing two-storey flat roof extension, the proposed addition would have a greater prominence upon the street scene and would be considered to form a poor architectural addition. The use of flat roofs at first-floor create a large and bulky addition which are unattractive. The glazed façade would draw attention to the extension from the public realm, adding to its prominence and exacerbating its incongruous appearance.
17. The NPPF is clear that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area. Whilst it is acknowledged that a flat roof at first-floor is existing, this extension is located to the rear of the hall and does not appear overly dominant of the building or street scene. The application has been given the opportunity to improve the appearance of this building and the modern extensions but has failed to take the opportunity to do so. Instead, the proposal would emphasise the existing modern extension and introduce a more prominent modern extension which would detract from the public realm.
18. The proposed extension would be considered to create a poor relationship with existing and nearby buildings and would be of a design that is not in keeping with the historic urban fabric of the site context. The proposed extension would be considered to lie contrary to part (x) and (xi) of Policy DM1 of the Development Management Plan and the NPPF.

Impact on Residential Amenity

19. The proposed development would be positioned away from neighbouring properties and would not be considered to have an overlooking, overbearing or overshadowing impact. The extension would facilitate the existing use of

the site as opposed to introducing a new purpose. Any sound levels that would be produced would be considered suitable for a town centre location. Furthermore, Church services are limited to only a few times per week and therefore the noise and disturbance will not be a constant or unreasonable impact. The proposal would be compliant with Policy DM1 in relation to the impact upon neighbouring buildings.

Highway Safety

20. The proposed development would have no alterations to the existing parking provision and vehicle accesses. The Highway Authority have been consulted on the application and raise no objection to the proposal. The proposed development is not considered to impact upon highway safety.

CONCLUSION

21. The proposed two-storey side extension would have an overly prominent appearance that would fail to preserve the setting of the Church and fail to make a positive contribution to local character. Additionally, the proposed extension would be considered to form a bulky and incongruous addition that would exacerbate the poor design of the existing modern extension, detrimental to visual amenity of the street scene.

CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS (summary of responses):

Rayleigh Town Council: None received.

Essex County Council Place Services Historic Buildings Advice (prior to amendments):

The proposal seeks to add a large extension onto the modest curtilage listed school building which has already been adversely impacted by an existing large rear extension. Whilst there is no objection to the internal alterations which affect modern fabric, the creation of a prominent façade/entrance and lift tower to be above the existing roof height of the building would result in an overly dominant addition that fails to preserve the architectural interest of the curtilage listed building and the pre-eminence of the adjacent Church, through inappropriate development in its setting. I recommend that these contentious elements are omitted.

Essex County Council Place Services Historic Buildings Advice (revised scheme):

The revised plans are an improvement from previous however it is still proposed to create a large new entrance upon the modestly proportioned curtilage listed building. Previous concerns raised in the letter dated 30/04/2021 remain relevant. In particular, the awkward extension proposed would exacerbate the impact from the existing poor modern additions to the rear and would infill the existing break in built

form as viewed from the streetscene. The proposals would, in my opinion, result in an overly dominant addition which would fail to preserve the setting of the Church and fail to make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness character. Therefore, the proposals are considered to be contrary to Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Paragraph 192c of the NPPF (2019).

I am unable to support this application. The level of harm is considered to be less than substantial, Paragraph 196 being relevant.

I consider there to be an acceptable scheme here, there may be scope for a single storey foyer element however this would have to be carefully considered against sympathetically responding to the form of the curtilage listed building and the setting of the Church.

Neighbour representations:

One response has been received from the following address;

High Street; 172A.

And which in the main makes the following comments and objections;

- My concerns are two-fold and centre on the projected attraction of various new groups, organisations and parties to the revitalised Base area.
- The area is unsuitable for the increased vehicular traffic that will necessarily be generated by this extra input and that the access is on a blind bend in the High Street which already causes problems when the facility is in use
- The church is not considerate of neighbours, with services causing noise and disturbance
- The more frequent use of the premises may occur as a result

Relevant Development Plan Policies:

National Planning Policy Framework 2019

Core Strategy Adopted Version (December 2011)

Development Management Plan (December 2014) Policy DM1

Parking Standards: Design and Good Practice Supplementary Planning Document (December 2010)

Supplementary Planning Document 2 (January 2007) – Housing Design

The Essex Design Guide (2018)

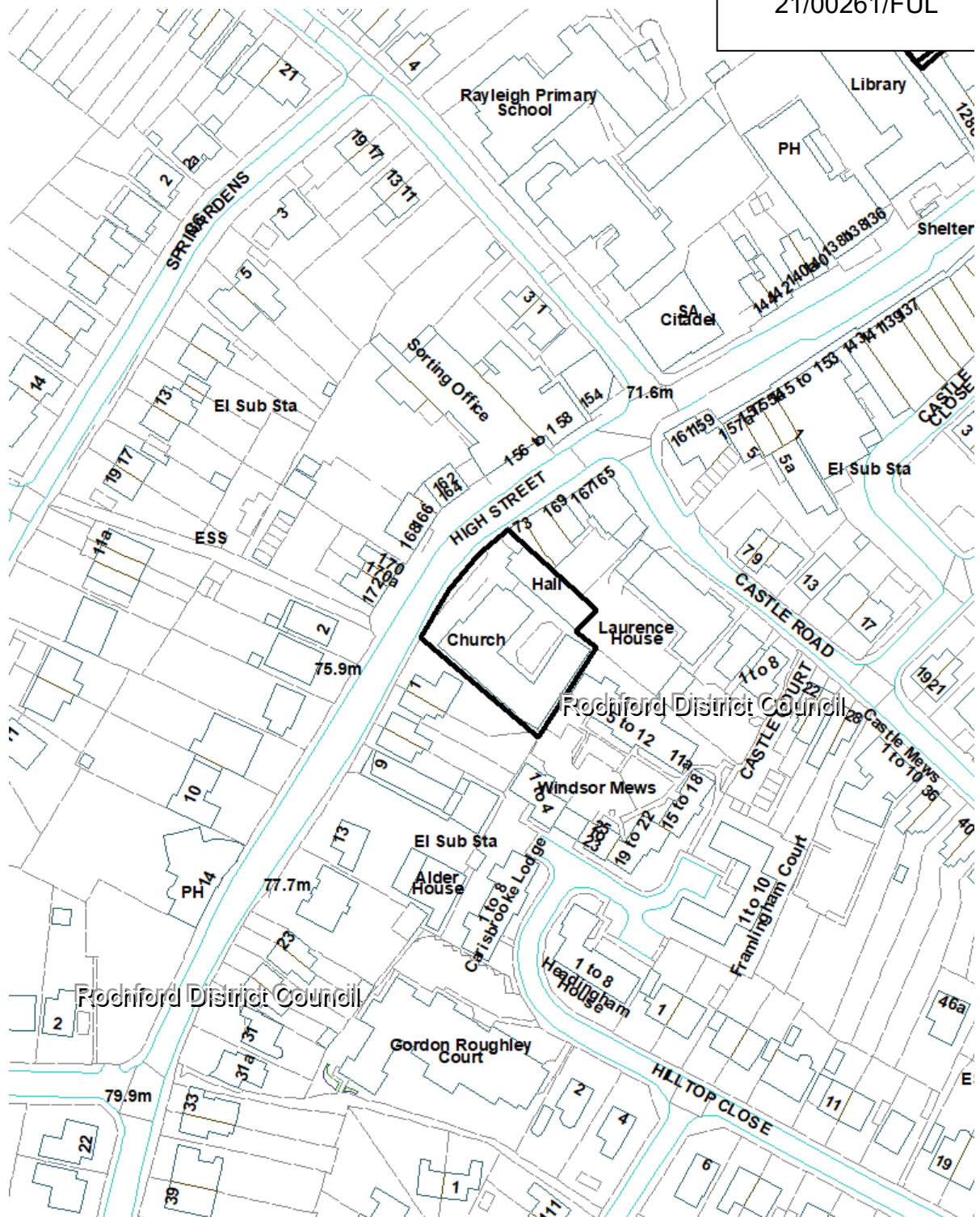
RECOMMENDATION: REFUSE

1. The application site is a curtilage listed building and therefore consideration must be given to the heritage asset. The proposed two-storey side extension would be considered to result in an overly dominant addition which would fail to preserve the setting of the Church and fail to make a positive contribution to the local character. It is acknowledged that the revised plans are an improvement of the original drawings, however, the proposed extension would still be considered to result in a level of harm that is less than substantial. The proposed extension would lie contrary to part (viii) of Policy DM1 of the Development Management Plan and Section 16 of the NPPF.

2. The proposed two-storey side extension, by way of the overly bulky and prominent flat roof, would be considered to form an incongruous addition within the street scene and historic built context. The proposed extension would exacerbate the poor design of the existing flat roofed extension given the dominant positioning and visibility from the street scene. The design of the extension would emphasise the jarring juxtaposition between the modern extensions and historic urban fabric that would form an uncomfortable arrangement. The proposal would fail to take the opportunity to improve the character and quality of the area. Subsequently, the proposed extension would fail to comply with part (x) and (xi) of Policy DM1 of the Council's Development Management Plan and the NPPF.

The local Ward Member(s) for the above application are Cllr M Wilkinson, Cllr J Lawmon and Cllr R R Dray.

21/00261/FUL



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