SITE: Bishopstoke Community Hall, Riverside, Bishopstoke, Eastleigh, SO50 6LQ

Ref. C/13/71975 Received: 21/01/2013 (18/03/2013)

APPLICANT: Bishopstoke Parish Council

PROPOSAL: Erection of single storey prefabricated building

AMENDMENTS:

RECOMMENDATION:

TEMPORARY PERMISSION

CONDITIONS AND REASONS:

(1) The use hereby permitted shall be for a limited period expiring three years from the date of this permission. On or before this date the permitted use shall cease and the site shall revert back to its former use. Reason: The development is of a type not considered suitable for permanent retention.

(2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: DWG-14637-001, DWG-14637-002, DWG-14637-003.

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

(3) The development hereby permitted shall be for use by Bishopstoke Parish Council only and when the development is no longer occupied by the Parish Council:
   a) the approved development shall cease;
   b) within one month all materials and equipment brought onto the site in connection with the development shall be removed;
c) within two months the land shall be restored to its former condition in accordance with the details that have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: The site and proposed development is not suitable for use by other organisations.

Note to Applicant: It is considered that, subject to compliance with the conditions and any obligations attached to this permission, the proposed development is acceptable because it will not materially harm the character of the area, the amenity of neighbours or highway safety, and it is in accordance with the policies and proposals of the development plan, as listed below, and after due regard to all other relevant material considerations the local planning authority is of the opinion that permission should be granted.

The following development plan policies are relevant to this decision and the conditions attached to it:


Pre submission Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2011-2029 DM1, DM10.

In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Eastleigh Borough Council take a positive and proactive approach to the handling of development proposals so as to achieve, whenever possible, a positive outcome and to ensure all proposals are dealt with in a timely manner.

Note to Applicant: The granting of this temporary permission is intended to allow Bishopstoke Parish Council the opportunity to explore opportunities for a more appropriate, permanent solution to the lack of a parish presence in Bishopstoke.

Conservation Area Report:

This application has been referred to Committee in the interests of open and transparent decision-making.

The site and its surroundings

1. The proposed development site is located within the historic core of Bishopstoke village and consists of an area of land in the curtilage of the Bishopstoke Memorial Hall, southeast of the memorial building, between the war memorial and the existing storage shed.

2. The memorial hall is sat back from the edge of pavement and is raised above the level of the street, by approx. 1.5m. The boundary is defined by a wall and railings at the front of the site, although the land where the proposed structure would sit is raised above the height of the boundary treatment. The
site is fairly level from the front of the memorial building towards the rear of the plot with a very gentle incline.

3. The road directly abuts the River Itchen on the opposite side, following its course until just beyond the hall. To the east of the site is the Angler’s Inn and a run of domestic and commercial properties, together with the local doctor’s surgery, most of which sited at the pavement edge. To the west is the Glebe Meadow Recreation Ground, a large area of well-used public open space. Vehicular parking is an issue along Riverside, with on-road parking dominating the street scene and narrowing the carriage width.

Description of application

4. The proposed development consists of a single storey prefabricated building 8.5m long, 3.2m wide, and 2.5m high, with a flat roof. It is intended to provide Bishopstoke Parish Council with an office in the area, which at present they do not have.

5. The planning application was originally intended to seek the permanent siting of the prefabricated office on the development site, to allow Bishopstoke Parish a permanent solution to their current lack of facilities. This has evolved during the course of the application, as can be seen below.

Site area

6. The site area is 723.8 sq. metres.

Trees

7. None affected by this application.

Site characteristics

8. The memorial hall is an important building for the Bishopstoke community and was erected in memorial of the fallen in the two World Wars. It occupies a prominent location in the conservation area, raised above the street level, adjacent to the Glebe Meadow public open space and the Anglers Inn.

9. The building itself is not of a robust construction and does not positively contribute visually to the conservation area. There is some tree screening to the northwest of the hall, a grassed bank behind the boundary wall along Riverside, and a grassed area between the hall and pub, which contains the war memorial set back from the front elevation of the building and a storage shed to the rear of the site. The proposed structure is intended to occupy the space between the existing shed and memorial. The rear boundary runs along part of the public open space and allows for a rear access to the memorial hall plot and building.
Relevant planning history

10. The relevant planning history is as follows:

- Z/04313/001/00 - Erection of Storage Shed - 26/09/1988 Permit

Representations received

11. Chairman, Age Concern Bishopstoke: ‘While having no particular objection to the application itself, it is surprising to see it is a delegated decision and not one for the Local Area Committee. The applicant is Bishopstoke Parish Council of which Cllr Anne Winstanley is the Chairman. Eastleigh Borough Council will be making the decision and Cllr Winstanley is its deputy leader. Cllr Winstanley is also the Local Area Committee's representative to the Memorial Hall on whose grounds the parish office will be erected, if the application is permitted. It could be perceived that due to Cllr Winstanley's involvement in every organisation involved in the application that this is a done deal and thus I would have thought should have been an LAC decision which would better preserve the impression of a robust planning decision.’

Consultation responses

12. No consultees.

Policy context: Designation Applicable to Site

- Within Built-Up Area Boundary
- Within Established Residential Area
- Within Designated Conservation Area

Development plan saved policies, emerging local plan policies and SPD’s

- Eastleigh Borough Local Plan Review (2001-2011): 59BE; 169LB; 186IN;
- Pre submission Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2011-2029: DM1; DM10

Planning policy guidance / statement

- National Planning Policy Framework

Policy commentary

13. The above policies and guidance combine to form the criteria against which this application will be assessed with particular regard to impact on street scene and character of the conservation area.
Assessment of proposal: development plan and/or legislative background

14. The legislative context is set out in Section 74(3) of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which states that Section 66(1) of the Act applies. This indicates that in considering whether to grant Conservation Area consent: "The Local Planning Authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses."

15. In addition, Section 72(1) of the Act states: "In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a Conservation Area of any powers (under the Planning Acts), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area."

16. The development site is located within the built urban edge in an established residential/commercial area; therefore the principle of development is accepted, subject to the nature, scale and design of the proposed works being in compliance with the relevant local planning policies and guidance.

17. At present, Bishopstoke Parish Council does not have a physical presence in Bishopstoke. Considerable time and effort has been spent by the parish to identify a good location to establish a base for the parish in the heart of Bishopstoke to raise their profile and provide a good service to the local community. This site has been the only site which has come forward and the presence of the parish here would provide some benefit to both the users and managers of the memorial hall by being able to assist with event bookings/tickets, lock up, etc; and the local community due to its accessible location and the improved ability to contact the parish. The provision of facilities for use by the community, such as parish halls, is supported in policy 186.IN of the Local Plan Review, provided they do not adversely affect the amenity of nearby occupiers. It could be argued this proposed development falls within the provisions of this policy.

18. However, the site is located within the heart of the conservation area and policy 169.LB of the local plan review requires development to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area, not detract from the character of the area and the mass, materials and form of the building and associated landscape features are in scale and harmony with the existing and adjoining buildings and the area as a whole. The materials should be appropriate to and in sympathy with the existing buildings and the character of the area, and development should not generate excessive traffic, car parking, or noise. Policy 59.BE requires development to take full and proper account of the context of the site including the character and appearance of the locality and be appropriate in mass, scale, materials, layout, design and siting. It also requires a high standard of landscape design, have a satisfactory means of access and layout for vehicles, cyclist and pedestrians, make provision for refuse and cycle storage and avoid unduly impacting on neighbouring uses through overlooking, loss of light, loss of outlook, noise and fumes.

19. The proposed building is a pre-fabricated building which can be assembled on site. Whilst these types of buildings are typically not attractive, the 'Quarto'
has a reasonable appearance and would not necessarily detract from the area, particularly given the condition and finish of the existing hall. It would result in the loss of some open space which would not be desirable long term, unless the whole site was to be redeveloped to provide an improved memorial hall, as supported by the Conservation Area Appraisal, when an opportunity to properly consider the site constraints/assets would be available. Indeed, the proposed development should not jeopardise the long term goal to improve the community facilities and enhance this part of the conservation area by redesigning and rebuilding the community hall. However, the memorial hall is privately owned and run and there are currently no prospects of this project coming forward.

20. It is the intention of the parish to have the office open part time, including one evening a week to allow residents who work office hours to visit. Given that the public house adjacent has standard opening hours, and the memorial hall has evening performances, it is unreasonable to impose a condition restricting the opening hours. With regards to parking, there is no parking provision on site, however the majority of visitors are likely to come on foot or be combining visits to other services such as the shops or doctors surgery, which has been one of the reasons for the site to be as accessible as possible. It is not anticipated that the parish office will generate a significant increase in traffic or parking.

21. In weighing up the visual impact on the conservation area, through the introduction of a pre-fabricated building and the reduction in the space around the memorial, against the benefits of the parish council having a presence in the heart of the conservation area and the gains for the community, it is felt that the proposed development would, on balance, be acceptable in the short term.

22. In considering whether a permanent permission is appropriate, the potential redevelopment of the site should not be jeopardised by granting permission for an additional structure for use by an organisation outside of the management committee for the memorial hall. A temporary permission is therefore considered more acceptable and allows the impact regarding parking to also be evaluated. As the building can potentially be disassembled and erected elsewhere with fairly limited costs, this seems to be a reasonable solution. The period of three years has been agreed, which should allow the parish sufficient time to establish themselves and for it to become apparent if there are issues regarding parking. It is hoped during this period that it may be possible for discussions to commence on the potential redesign of the memorial hall, which can inform any discussions regarding a possible location for the parish facility in the future.

23. Given it is the benefit to the local community gained by the parish being located in Bishopstoke that has swayed the decision, a condition restricting its use to the parish is appropriate. Whilst it is unlikely that the building would be rented out for a commercial venture, this would not be an acceptable use with regards to location, impact on the conservation area and parking.
Other material considerations

24. Also of relevance is the pre-submission Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2011-2029. While not yet adopted it does carry weight by virtue of being intended as the current local plan’s replacement. With regards to this application, the new policies essentially echo those of the current plan and are not considered to affect the recommendation put forward.

Conclusion

25. Recommend temporary permission, subject to standard conditions and a condition restricting the building’s use to the parish in its functions.