



Delegated Report

Full Planning Application

Application No:	20220467
Location:	The Mercy Centre, Rose Street, Northfleet, Gravesend
Description:	Erection of a first floor side extension and a single storey ground floor and basement side extension together with internal alterations.
Applicant:	Pastor Ladi Lawal, RCCG City of His Grace
Site Visit Date:	21 June 2022

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application Plan

Location Plan

Drawing no. MC.21.248.P01 Existing and Proposed Basement 1 Floor Plan

Drawing no. MC.21.248.P02 Existing and Proposed Ground Floor Plan

Drawing no. MC.21.248.P03 Existing and Proposed First Floor Plan

Drawing no. MC.21.248.P04 Existing and Proposed Front and Side Elevations

Drawing no. MC.21.248.P05 Existing and Proposed Rear and Side Elevations

Existing and Proposed Block Plans

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20131110	Retention of the change of use from Buddhist Temple to Class D1 Place of worship and installation of 5 no. air conditioning units to the east elevation	Permitted	03.02.2014
20060119	Change of use to a Buddhist temple with residential unit for a monk	Permitted	12.05.2006
19840870	Application under Regulation 4 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1976 for use of former school as a community centre	Permitted	14.01.1985
19790959	Use of former school as play and weight training centre	Permitted	28.12.1979
19770576	Community centre	Permitted	04.07.1978

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale and Distribution of Development
- CS03 – Northfleet Embankment and Swanscombe Peninsular East Opportunity Area
- CS10 – Physical and Social Infrastructure
- CS11 – Transport

- CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- CS18 – Climate Change
- CS19 – Design and Development Principles

Saved Policies in the Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994

- T1 – Impact of Development on the Highway Network
- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards

Paragraph 33 of the NPPF (2021) sets out that policies within adopted local plans should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years, and should then be updated as necessary. Such reviews are also a legal requirement as set out in Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) England Regulations 2012.

The Council undertook such a review in September 2019 and found that the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy is in need of a partial review in terms of Policy CS02, due to the increased need for housing since the Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted and the need to ensure that a sufficient land supply exists to meet this need. Whilst saved policies from the Local Plan 1st Review (1994) generally conform with the NPPF (2021), the Council will also seek to replace these.

National Planning Policy Framework 2021

- Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development
- Section 8 – Promoting safe and healthy communities
- Section 9 – Promoting sustainable transport
- Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places
- Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

- SPG4 – KCC Parking Standards (2006)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees

KCC Heritage was consulted as the site lies within an area of archaeological potential, but comments are not necessary for the minor type of development proposed.

Neighbouring properties

The application has been advertised by individual neighbour letters to 39 properties, and on site. The consultation periods expired on 27 May and 3 June 2022 respectively.

No letters of representation have been received from neighbouring properties.

Local Ward Councillors were also consulted, and no responses were received.

Officer's Analysis

Proposal

This application seeks permission for the erection of a first floor side extension and a single storey ground floor and basement side extension, together with internal alterations.

The extensions will infill part of the walled area to the eastern side of the building. The single storey element will be for a meeting room and the first floor extension over the existing single storey side extension will be for toilets. The existing basement will be extended underneath the single storey extension.

There will also be 2 offices added within the existing main hall space on the first floor.

The extensions will have a flat roof and will be of brick construction to match the existing.

Principle Issues

As the use of the building as a place of worship (The Redeemed Christian Church of God) is not changing, the main issue to consider in the determination of this application is the design of the extensions and the impact on the application building and surrounding street scene.

Due to the separation distances from residential properties and there being no change to the existing parking arrangements (there is no existing parking) together with the sustainable location of the church, there are no significant amenity or highways concerns.

Design, Character and Appearance

Section 12 of the NPPF 2021 relates to achieving well-designed places and sets out the Government's requirements in relation to design issues. Paragraph 126 emphasises the importance of achieving high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

Paragraph 130 of the NPPF 2021 seeks to ensure that development will add to the quality of an area, be visually attractive, and sympathetic to local character and history. Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014 reflects these aims and requires that new development is well designed and respects the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

The Mercy Centre is a place of worship located in the existing old Northfleet residential area, as set out in Policy CS03 of the Core Strategy 2014 (Northfleet Embankment and Swanscombe Peninsular East Opportunity Area). The relevant pre-text to this policy at paragraph 4.4.16 states that the Council supports the improvement of local centres to meet the needs of the local community and requires new development to be well integrated with the existing neighbourhoods.



The church is an unlisted building of brick and flint construction with some modern alterations to the side in the location of the proposed extensions. The site slopes down from north to south, with a walkway and steps immediately alongside the walled eastern boundary of the site. The church is positioned on an area of greenspace and is surrounded largely by residential properties beyond the boundaries of this green.

Whilst in principle support would be given to such a proposal for the enhancement of a community facility that helps improve community well-being, as set out in Policy CS10 of the Core Strategy 2014, planning policy also recognises the importance of new development being visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive, and seeks the enhancement of and integration into the local area.

The proposed flat roof over the extension at first floor level in particular is a very poor design and is completely unrelated and at odds with the appearance of the main church building, which is attractive in its own right and has a prominent position within the centre of an open green space. The design of the proposed extensions would result in a bulky and obtrusive extension at the side of the building.

In terms of the character and appearance of the main church building there is an opportunity to create an improvement on the design of any extension and better integrate such an extension into the main building. The opportunity that this proposal creates is found to be lacking. The proposal is considered to comprise inappropriate and obtrusive flat roof extensions that are bulky and poorly designed, and that would be out of keeping with the character and appearance of the main church building and would fail to enhance the surrounding area. The proposal would not comply with the requirements of Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014 or paragraphs 126 and 130 of the NPPF 2021.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Refuse.

The proposal comprises inappropriate, unrelated and obtrusive extensions that are bulky and poorly

designed, and that would be out of keeping with the character and appearance of the main church building and would fail to enhance the surrounding area. The proposal would not comply with the requirements of Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 or paragraphs 126 and 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.

(For reason for refusal and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Mrs Katherine Parkin	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:	<i>K. Parkin</i>	Signed:	<i>R Hart</i>
Dated:	28th June 2022	Dated:	29th June 2022