

Officer Report

Application Number:	HGY/2023/1401
Application Type:	Full planning permission
Address:	Wood Green Social Club, 3 Stuart Crescent, Wood Green, London, N22 5NJ
Proposal:	Change of use of the ground floor of 3 Stuart Crescent from a social club to a place of worship.
Case Officer:	Eunice Huang
Valid Date:	07/08/2023
Applicant:	Pastor Moses Omoviye
Agent:	Mr Michael Hanily

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse

1. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE PERMISSION

2. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND LOCATION DETAILS

Proposed development

2.1 This application is for change of use of the ground floor of 3 Stuart Crescent from a social club to a place of worship (church).

2.2 The existing building is retained and the proposed place of worship would occupy the ground floor. The building would operate as a single premise across the basement level, ground floor level and first floor level. Ancillary storage, bin storage and cycle storage and plant rooms is located on the basement level. The first floor level would retain its use as a community/social club space. The residential flats on the second floor level are also retained.

2.3 The site has 9no. off-street car spaces. 10no. cycle spaces are provided in the basement level.

2.4 The place of worship will accommodate approximately 150-200 people on Sunday, which is the busiest day of the week. Services will also run on Wednesday evenings. The premises will also be utilised for events such as meetings or parties on an ad hoc basis.

2.5. The church would have four full-time employees, as well as volunteers on a part-time basis.

Site and Surroundings

2.6 The site comprises two separate buildings, 3 & 4 Stuart Crescent, with a corridor linking them internally to function as one building. The main use of the building was 'Wood Green Labour Club' before it closed in January, but equally there is some residential accommodation on site.

2.7 The main building on site is a three-storey building faced in red brick with bright blue painted bays and large blue windows. The building has a slate clad second floor level and a flat roof, as well as garages situated to the rear. This building is identified as a detractor within Trinity Gardens Conservation Area.

2.8 The other building on site is a two-storey Victorian property, known as Sterling House. This is a locally listed building and is constructed of London Stock Brick with a slate roof, along with white painted canted bay windows at ground level.

2.9 Trinity Gardens Conservation Area is centred on a relatively small geographical area consisting of a number of sub areas. The site is located approximately 300m to the north of Wood Green Town Centre. The site is located within a PTAL 6a.

2.10 The rear of the site adjoins the rear gardens of Nos. 15-21 Eward Grove.

Relevant Planning and Enforcement history

2.11 The most recent planning history relating to the site as is as follows:

- HGY/2021/2031: Partial demolition of rear extensions and construction of 5 x part two, part three storey mews dwellings. Demolition of three storey front projection, demolition and re-construction of existing top floor of Social Club building and change of use of first floor from Community use to C3 (Residential) with balcony areas and internal re-configuration of existing 5 no. residential units within 3 & 4 Stuart Crescent and creation of an additional 9 no. residential units with associated landscaping works and parking. Approved with conditions 7 June 2022. Note: The agent has advised that the approved HGY/2021/2031 scheme is not to be implemented and has no connection to the proposed application.

3. Consultation response

3.1 The following responses were received following consultation on the application:

1) LBH Transport: Objects to the application. The Highway Authority is unable to support this proposal because it could lead to an increase in road danger and parking stress locally to the site.

The applicant has submitted a Transport Statement and Travel Plan, which outlines a modal split for the existing congregation. The modal split is predicted to be 106 car passengers and 50 drivers for Sunday services, the busiest service of the week.

The new local parking levels would be increased to between 81%-87.1%, which is when parking stress on-street is at its limits. The submitted parking stress survey has only been conducted on Sundays making the parking survey not fit for purpose, as church services will also take place during the week and the site has potential to be hired out for events. Subsequently, this is not in accordance with the published London Plan 2021 Policy T2 Healthy Streets which states that development proposals should 'reduce the dominance of vehicles on London's streets whether stationary or moving'.

The site location is not suitable for any type of drop/pick-ups of passengers, as it is near the junction with White Hart Lane, and double yellow lines are located on the adjacent highway. This could lead to vehicle/pedestrian collisions or increase traffic conditions during, before and after events and church services. Therefore, this would not be in accordance with the published London Plan 2021 Policy T4 Assessing and mitigating transport impacts, which states, 'development proposals should not increase road danger.'

It is understood that the site used to be used as a Social Club, with the possibilities producing some parking increase in the area. Although as stated within the Design and Access Statement, this did close in January 2021, making the site vacant for almost three years. Thus, the local vicinity is not presented with any high parking demand in the evening and weekends. The new parking stress levels would of 81% - 87.1% is deemed too high for a residential street.

4. LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS

4.1 The application has been publicised by way of press advert, site notice and letters. The number of representations received from neighbours, local groups, etc in response to notification and publicity of the application were as follows:

No of individual responses: 55

Support: 49

Object: 6

4.2 The following issues were raised in representations that are material to the determination and are addressed in the next section of this report:

- Traffic and parking impact – the area is already under parking stress and subject to heavy traffic and road safety hazards, with noise disturbance and poor air quality within a residential area. The local streets are already used for parking by patrons of a nearby function hall, Civic Centre, Tottenham Hotspur Stadium and another church.
- Noise impact – from vehicles, as well as attendees during congregations/events and when leaving the site.

5. MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 The main planning considerations raised by the proposed development are:

1. Principle of Development;
2. Neighbour Amenity;
3. Transport.

Principle of Development

5.2 Policy DM49 of the Council's Development Management DPD 2017 states that the Council will seek to protect existing social and community facilities unless a replacement facility is provided which meets the needs of the community. Where a development proposal may result in the loss of a facility, evidence will be required to show that the facility is no longer required in its current use, the loss would not result in a shortfall in provision of that use and the existing facility is not viable in its current use and there is no demand for any other suitable community use on the site.

5.3 Policy DM49 elaborates that proposals for new and extended social and community facilities and the sharing of facilities will be supported by the Council provided they:

- a) Are accessible by public transport, walking and cycling, preferably in town centres or local centres, Growth Areas or Areas of Change;
- b) Are located within the community that they are intended to serve;
- c) Provide flexible, multifunctional and adaptable space, where practicable;
- d) Do not have significant adverse impact on road safety or traffic generation; and
- e) Protect the amenity of residential properties.

5.4 The application site formerly operated as 'Wood Green Social Club', which is classified as a community facility. It was established in the granting of past application HGY/2021/2031, that the day-to-day running of the Club was not viable and had not been for some time. A letter had been provided by the president and secretary of the Wood Green Social Club demonstrating that measures had been taken in an attempt to revive the club without success as membership numbers had continued to decline. The Club ceased operations in January 2021. HGY/2021/2031 included permission for a new community facility with a reduced floor area. Accordingly, the principle of the loss of the social club is acceptable.

5.5 Places of worship are defined as community facilities under the Council's Development Management DPD 2017. The proposal would therefore deliver a replacement community facility. There is thus no in-principle objection to the conversion of the site from a social club to another type of community facility. However, the transport and amenity considerations of the place of worship must be considered pursuant to Policy DM49.

5.6 The proposed place of worship has been submitted with a Transport Statement and Travel Plan that demonstrate that it engenders different levels of amenity impacts compared to the previous Social Club which had declining levels of patronage prior to its closure in January 2021. For example, the church would hold Sunday services in which there can be 150-200 members in attendance; alongside smaller services on Wednesdays and ad hoc events. The Transport Statement found that trips to the venue would primarily be made with cars. In contrast, the letter from the president and secretary of the Wood Green Social Club suggests that the Club's function room failed to be hired for events for about 8 years prior to its closure, and that much of the membership were local residents within Wood Green.

5.7 The church would also be more sizeable and have a greater impact than the approved community space under HGY/2021/2031. The church would occupy the ground floor area, with an approximate gross internal area of 828sqm. This figure does not include the ancillary storage/service areas in the basement level, nor the community/social club space on the

first floor level, which would remain part of the same premises as the ground floor level. The community space on the ground floor level was approved under HGY/2021/2031 with a gross internal area of 256m², with the aim of facilitating a community use of an appropriate scale that could function and co-exist with adjacent and on-site residential uses.

5.8 The proposal would not satisfy Policy DM49, because it will have a significant adverse impact on road safety and traffic generation, detracting from the amenity of the surrounding residential properties. While the site is located has a PTAL 6a, the modal split presented in the Transport Statement highlights a predominant use of cars. Further consideration of the traffic impacts are outlined further in this report. On this basis, the principle of the development is not supported.

Impact on the amenity of adjoining occupiers

5.9 London Plan Policy D6 outlines that the design must not be detrimental to the amenity of surrounding housing. Furthermore, DPD Policy DM1 states that development proposals must ensure a high standard of privacy and amenity for a development's users and neighbours. The Council will not support proposals that result in the unacceptable impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents and fail to address issues of noise likely to arise from the use and activities of the development.

5.10 Objections have included concerns about noise impacts from attendees during congregations/events and when leaving the site. The submitted transport plan indicates that Sunday services would be held during the day, and Wednesday services would be held at 7:45pm. These service times would not impact sleeping hours and would thus be acceptable in terms of noise impact. However, there is no information about the nature and hours of miscellaneous events and parties that may be held at the church. Should permission be granted for this proposal, a planning condition would be required to restrict hours of use to protect the amenity of neighbouring properties.

Transport

5.11 London Plan Policy T1 requires developments to make most effective use of land, reflecting connectivity and accessibility by existing and future public transport, walking and cycling routes. Cumulative impacts of development on public transport and road network capacity, including walking and cycling, should be taken into account, in line with London Plan Policy T4. The Council will tackle climate change and improve transport quality/safety through: minimising congestion, promoting public transport/walking/cycling, promoting car sharing/car clubs and seeking to locate major trip generating development in locations with good access to public transport.

5.12 Car-free development should be the starting point for all development in places that are well-connected by public transport, in line with London Plan Policy T6. The maximum parking standards of the London Plan should be applied to development proposals. The Council will support proposals for no on-site parking where: there are alternative means of transport available, public transport accessibility level (PTAL) is at least 4 and a controlled parking zone (CPZ) exists, in accordance with DPD Policy DM32.

5.13 The site has 9no. off-street car spaces. 10no. cycle spaces are provided in the basement level. The application documents indicate that all 9no. off-street car spaces would be available for the use of the proposed place of worship. However, it is unclear if these spaces would be shared with the existing residential uses on the site.

5.13 As noted above in this report, the Highway Authority is unable to support this proposal due to the traffic, parking impacts and road hazards generated by the church patronage. The Transport Statement and Travel Plan outline a modal split reliant upon car use – predicting 106 car passengers and 50 drivers for Sunday services, the busiest service of the week. This specific travel data for the proposal overrides consideration of the site's PTAL rating of 6a, which suggests excellent links to public transport. The new local parking levels would thus be increased to between 81%-87.1%, which is when parking stress on-street is at its limits. This level of parking stress is deemed too high for a residential area. It is noted that objections to this application primarily highlight concerns about the exacerbation of existing parking stress and traffic congestion.

5.14 The proposal may also increase road hazards – it is likely that drivers would attempt to drop off and pick up passengers at the site, before/after parking further away in the local area. However, the site location is not suitable for any type of drop/pick-ups of passengers, as it is near the junction with White Hart Lane, with double yellow lines. This could lead to vehicle/pedestrian collisions, as well as increase traffic conditions during, before and after events and church services. Therefore, this would not be in accordance with the published London Plan 2021 Policy T4 Assessing and mitigating transport impacts, which states, 'development proposals should not increase road danger.'

5.15 Furthermore, there is inadequate information presented in the parking stress survey. The parking stress survey was only conducted on a single Sunday over a three hour period, when the CPZ is in operation. The survey does not account for proposed church services and events that would take place during the week. It is thus difficult to identify local parking availability when the CPZ is not in operation during the week.

5.16 As such, the proposal is contrary to the London Plan and DPD Policy in respect to parking and traffic impacts.

6 CONCLUSION

6.1 The proposal is considered unacceptable due to the traffic, parking impacts and road hazards generated by the place of worship. The proposal does not satisfy London Plan Policies T1, T4, T6 or DPD Policy DM32. Furthermore, there is inadequate information presented in relation to parking stress surveys.

6.2 All other relevant policies and considerations, including equalities, have been taken into account. Planning permission should be refused for the reasons set out above. The details of the decision are set out in the RECOMMENDATION.

7. CIL APPLICABLE

N/A

8. RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE PERMISSION

1. The proposal is considered unacceptable due to the traffic, parking impacts and road hazards generated by the place of worship. The proposal does not satisfy London Plan Policies T1, T4, T6 or DPD Policy DM32. Furthermore, there is inadequate information presented in relation to parking stress surveys.

Refusal Reasons:

The proposal is considered unacceptable due to the traffic, parking impacts and road hazards generated by the place of worship. The proposal does not satisfy London Plan Policies T1, T4, T6 or DPD Policy DM32. Furthermore, there is inadequate information presented in relation to parking stress surveys.