

SEWELL AND HAWKINS ARCHITECTS

6, Offord Road, London. N1 1DL Tel: 020 7609 9496 Fax: 020 7609 9493

E: sewellhawkins@yahoo.co.uk

Camden Planning Services, Environmental Department, Camden Town Hall, Argyle Street Entrance, London WC1H 8ND

14 January 2008

Ref. CPD - 0108.716

For the attention of Carlos Martin

By Post and "e-mail"

Dear Sirs

Change of Use from Church Accommodation/Nursery to Manse

We refer to the planning refusal notice Ref: 2007/4488/P dated 20 December 2007 and to the telephone conversation of Monday 7 January 2008 between Mr. Carlos Martin and Barry Sewell.

During the telephone conversation it was suggested further information in support of the church's need for the "change of use" could be presented by letter or "e-mail". This information is set out below.

It is our understanding that, in accordance with the Council's Unitary Development Plan 2006 (C2: Protecting Community Uses) our application needs to demonstrate that either (a) an adequate replacement facility will be provided in a location accessible to the users of the facility; or (b) the specific community use is no longer required and it can be demonstrated that there is no demand for another suitable community use of the site.

In this submission, we wish to demonstrate both (a) and (b). Additional supporting evidence is also included.

a) Adequate Replacement Facility

Prior to the present rebuilding programme at Highgate Road Chapel, most of the Victorian church and buildings had been closed as a result of the very poor conditions which had prevailed for many years. The fabric had deteriorated and in places was dangerous (dry rot was rampant, and fibrous asbestos was present); no disabled facilities existed, heating arrangements were totally inadequate etc. The church membership itself had retreated to meeting in just one room approximately 50 sq. metres in size, and even this was inadequately served with heating, sanitary accommodation, suitable kitchen services etc.

The new building currently under construction and principally set on two floors aggregates to approximately 470 sq. metres. The building has been designed in order to meet the needs of a variety of potential community activities, and includes:

- worship area with baptismal pool (seating 120 on cushioned chairs)
- function room (seating 70 persons at tables), immediately adjacent to the
- kitchen (with stainless steel work surfaces, 5 ring burner, serving hatch)
- 4 additional meeting rooms (each seating 8-15 persons)
- separate male and female toilets

tari da la companya d

- disabled toilet (with baby changing facilities)
- disabled lift
- state of the art audio visual facilities throughout.

All these facilities have been provided in a building which is both welcoming and very well serviced.

The building can therefore now be used by a wide variety of community activities, for example:

- Tenants associations
- Neighbourhood meetings
- Parents/carers and toddlers
- Drop-ins
- Youth clubs
- After-school clubs
- Special interest group meetings
- Other churches seeking occasional use (e.g. baptismal services) etc.

In effect the church offers a building with space and facilities which have never before been available to this local community.

In order for the community to gain full use of these facilities, the building must be properly organised and managed. To achieve this, the church's Minister needs to be housed close to the site. Our understanding of Camden Council's policies on affordable housing is that they are based on the idea that the majority of community facilities fundamentally rely on the involvement of key workers. The Minister is such a key worker, without whom the church — and its facilities - cannot function effectively. Since the late1870s, the Minister of Highgate Road Chapel has always lived in a manse adjacent to the church.

When proposals for a new church were discussed and submitted in 2003/4 a budget was earmarked for the purchase of a local property as a manse for the Minister. However, with the dramatic increase in house prices and the significant costs involved in meeting conservation requirements of the new church building; this budget is now totally inadequate. The building for which change of use is now sought appears to be the reasonable and logical solution for the provision of a manse for the church's key worker.

b) The Rainbow Nursery

In recent years, as well as being used by the Church on Sunday mornings as a Sunday School, the small detached hall at the rear of the site was also used on week-day mornings by the Rainbow Nursery. However, this accommodation was becoming increasingly unsatisfactory for their activities. In 2006, prior to the commencement of building works, the Rainbow Nursery found alternative local accommodation, which we understand is superior, and is operating successfully.

We should point out that the church did for a time consider investing in the building as a dedicated nursery, and investigations were undertaken. However, following discussions with Camden Council regarding Ofsted requirements for use in such a building, the accommodation was found to be unsuitable, and the trustees were further advised that the use of funds would not fulfill both their's and the church's obligations under the Charities Act – that is, to achieve the best return on its assets.

In the last few days we have revisited the various planning applications and permissions issued prior to the construction of the new church. The original application and approval, considered by the committee on 2 December 2004 (ref 2004/3672/P), proposed the small hall under discussion should be demolished without replacement: i.e. the council were satisfied the accommodation was not essential for community use.

Summary

- The new church building, nearing completion, represents a significant increase in usable community accommodation and facilities.
- This accommodation can only work at its designed capacity with the aid of its "Key Worker" ie the church's Minister. The Minister has always lived on-site,
- A new Manse on site has become the only way in which the Minister can be locally housed.
- * The Rainbow Nursery has relocated to new accommodation close by.
- The planning permission granted on 2 December 2004 allowed for the demolition of the original small hall which is now proposed for change of use to the Manse.

the control of the co

Yours sincerely

Barry Sewell

Sewell and Hawkins architects

and the control of th