

**Report to:** PLANNING COMMITTEE

**Date:** 01 April 2015

**Report from:** Head of Housing and Planning Services

**Application Address:** **Hastings Spiritualist Church, Portland Place, Hastings, TN34 1QN**

**Proposal:** **Change of use of ground floor to form 2 x 1 bedroom apartments. Change of use of second floor two bedroom apartment to 2 x 1 bedroom apartments. Alterations at first floor to facilitate proposed scheme.**

**Application No:** **HS/FA/15/00091**

**Recommendation:** **Grant Full Planning Permission**

**Ward:** CASTLE

**File No:** PO65008T

**Applicant:** Nexus Project Management Ltd Enterprise Centre 5 Brett Drive Enterprise Centre, Bexhill on Sea, East Sussex. TN40 2JP

**Interest:** Freeholder

**Existing Use:** Spiritualist church

**Policies**

Hastings Local Plan 2004:	DG1, DG2, TR8, H4
Conservation Area:	No
National Planning Policy Framework:	No Conflict
Hastings Planning Strategy:	FA2, SC1,
Hastings Local Plan, Development Management Plan, Revised Proposed Submission Version:	DM1, DM3, DM4,

**Public Consultation**

Adj. Properties:	Yes
Advertisement:	Yes - General Interest
Letters of Objection:	4
Petitions Received:	1

**Application Status:** Not delegated - Petition received

## Summary

This application is an amended resubmission of a previously approved scheme HS/FA/07/00315.

The proposal is for the change of use of the ground floor to 2 x 1 bedroom apartments. Subdivision of previously approved second floor penthouse to 2 x 1 bedroom apartments and other first floor alterations to facilitate the proposed scheme.

## **The Site and its Location**

The site is located on the West side of Portland Place in a mid-terrace position. The site is not a listed building and is not within a conservation area. The building is of a red brick construction with a flat roof. The property is set slightly back from the edge of the highway.

The area is mainly residential with the majority of properties being terraced houses. Wellington Terrace is situated along the eastern side of Portland Place. The properties of Wellington Terrace are two-storey with dormer windows in the roof. They are also built on an embankment which raises them higher than the properties on the western side of the road.

The site adjoins a residential property to the south, Jackson Hall to the north and shares a boundary with three residential properties.

## **Details of the Proposal and Other Background Information**

As stated above this application is an amended resubmission of previously approved HS/FA/07/00315. The application in 2007 was later granted an extension to time limit under HS/FA/10/00451. The main alterations to the previously approved scheme are as follows;

- Conversion of the ground floor to two 1 bedroom flats.
- Subdivision of the previously approved penthouse on the second floor to two 1 bedroom flats.
- Alterations to the floor layout on the first floor level
- Slight increase in height to the previously approved second floor extension.
- Alterations to front elevation, fenestration and relocation of entrance door.

## **Previous Site History**

HS/FA/07/00315 Refurbishment of existing church at ground floor level. Conversion of first floor to 2 x 1 bedroom flats, together with new extension at second floor level to accommodate 1 x 2 bedroom penthouse flat.

HS/FA/10/00451 Extension to time limit for implementation of planning permission HS/FA/07/00315.

## **Details of Consultations**

As part of this planning application 83 neighbouring properties were consulted and a site notice was displayed. In response 4 letters of objection were received and a valid petition with 10 signatures were submitted.

Objections include rubbish, density and overcrowding, danger to pedestrians, loss of privacy, poor quality of accommodation, visual impact and domination of surrounding properties, poor quality drawings, poor design and poor access.

## **Planning Considerations**

Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states:

"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise".

### Design and appearance

The majority of the exterior works required to facilitate this conversion have previously been approved under earlier applications. However, it is now proposed to increase the height of the previously approved second storey extension by approximately 0.32m. Having discussed this increase with the applicant, it has been stated that the increase is to facilitate adequate insulation within the roof. The roof design has also been amended to no longer include the mansard roof previously approved under the 2007 planning application. The roof design is now a simple flat roof providing a stepped frontage between Jackson Hall on the right and No.7 Portland Place on the left. The external appearance of the property has also been redesigned to relate in a more sympathetic manner to neighbouring properties.

Although the window design and positioning has been amended, I am of the opinion that the proposal is unlikely to have a greater impact on the privacy of the neighbouring properties than at present.

### Housing need

Portland Place is located in close proximity to the town centre making this site ideal for people who work in the town. The site is also within close proximity to bus stops along Queens Road and within walking distance of the main railway station meaning this location will be attractive for people who work in other parts of the town and wider area. The previously approved conversion to 3 flats was considered to provide residential accommodation in a much needed town centre location. Taking this into account I am of the opinion that the creation of three additional flats would further contribute to the much needed housing in this area.

### Living environment

Hastings Borough Council Planning Department currently have no accommodation size standards for new flats. Policy DM3 of the emerging DM plan introduces new standards for residential accommodation but that has not been adopted yet. However having assessed the proposed flats against these standards it is apparent that flats 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 comply with the minimum floor space requirement. Flat 3 located on the first floor is under the required size however, a flat within this space has previously been approved. Taking this into account, I am of the opinion that the overall living accommodation is considered acceptable.

### Transport

With regards to the lack of parking provision it should be noted that the site is within a town centre location where the Hastings Local Plan 2004 acknowledges that car parking provision is difficult to accommodate. Any residents of the proposed flats that require a car will be able to use the existing parking facilities across the town, including the car parks. Furthermore the lack of parking spaces will also encourage people to walk, cycle and make use of public transport. It is not considered that the lack of any off-street parking would justify a refusal in this case.

### Conclusion

It should be noted that the conversion of part of the site to residential and the erection of second storey has previously been granted permission under HS/FA/07/00315. An extension to time (HS/FA/10/00451) was also later granted at planning committee in 2010. The works to implement this application have commenced on site but have halted due to the proposal being amended. Having reviewed the previously approved plans I am of the opinion that the proposed external alteration will result in a more sympathetic development that would appear in keeping with the existing street scene. The proposed increase in flats from 3 to 6 would provide additional, much needed housing within the town centre.

Taking the above in to account, I am of the opinion that the proposed works are acceptable in this location and I therefore recommend the proposal for approval subject to the following conditions.

### **Evidence of Community Involvement**

These proposals comply with the development plan in accordance with Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

The Human Rights considerations have been taken into account fully in balancing the planning issues.

### **Recommendation**

#### **Grant Full Planning Permission subject to the following conditions:**

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
2. No development shall take place above ground until the following details have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
  - 1) Large scale details of proposed entrance doors, windows and rooflights.
  - 2) Details of proposed render/paint colour.Details of the proposed rainwater goods.
3. None of the flats hereby approved shall be occupied until such time as the bin store as shown on the approved plans has been provided to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.
4. With the exception of internal works the building works required to carry out the development allowed by this permission must only be carried out within the following times:-

08.00 - 18.00 Monday to Friday  
08.00 - 13.00 on Saturdays  
No working on Sundays or Public Holidays.
5. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: DD/portlandchurch/01, DD/portlandchurch/02, DD/portlandchurch/03,

**Reasons:**

1. This condition is imposed in accordance with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
2. To ensure that the finished development takes proper account of the character of the surrounding area in its use of external materials in the interests of the amenity of the area. (Hastings Local Plan 2004 - Policy DG1).
3. To ensure a satisfactory standard of development.
4. To safeguard the amenity of adjoining residents. (Hastings Local Plan 2004 - Policy DG4).
5. For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

**Notes to the Applicant**

1. Failure to comply with any condition imposed on this permission may result in enforcement action without further warning.
2. Statement of positive engagement: In dealing with this application Hastings Borough Council has actively sought to work with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner, in accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
3. The proposal may be a material change of use to which the Building Regulations 1991 apply and a building regulation submission may be necessary before the change of use takes place.
4. The applicant should consult the Building Control Section with regard to sound insulation.
5. Consideration should be given to the provision of a domestic sprinkler system.

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**Officer to Contact**

Mrs E Meppem, Telephone 01424 783288

**Background Papers**

Application No: HS/FA/15/00091 including all letters and documents