

**Agenda Item: 6.10**

**This is a Major Application for which the 13 week period expires on 07/06/2007.**

07/00962/P                      08/03/2007                      Broad Green

Application for full planning permission

Agent:  
Mr Giles Arnold  
Stewardship  
PO Box 99  
Loughton  
Essex  
IG10 3QJ

Applicant:  
Potters House Christian Church  
Croydon  
C/O 15 East India Way  
Croydon  
Surrey  
CRO 6NZ

Location: Acacia Filling Station, 36 Pitlake, Croydon

Description: Use within class D1 (non residential institutions) as a place of worship with ancillary community related activities

Drawing No(s): 2 x site plans; ground floor plan; first floor plan

**Recommendation: Grant Permission**

Subject to the following condition(s) and reason(s):-

1. Unless otherwise previously agreed by the Local Planning Authority in writing the parking spaces shall be provided as specified in the application before any part of the development is occupied and shall be retained for so long as the development remains in existence.

Reason: To ensure an acceptable standard of development having regard to the Policies of the Croydon Replacement Unitary Development Plan (The Croydon Plan)

2. The application premises shall be used for this purpose only and for no other purpose within Class D1 of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order, 1987.

Reason: To protect the amenities of adjoining occupiers

3. The development shall be begun within three years of the date of the permission.

Reason: To comply with the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

In granting permission the local planning authority had regard to the following policies:-

- . The relevant policies of the Croydon Replacement Unitary Development Plan (the Croydon Plan) are SP1, UD6-8, UD13, SP9-10, EP1-3, SP14, T2-4, T8, T11, SP15, EM5, SP27, CS1.

The development is considered to be satisfactory in relation to the following:-

- . (a) the character of the development in the surrounding area

- (b) the impact on the amenities of the occupiers of adjacent and nearby properties
  - (c) the safety of pedestrians and motorists on the adjacent highway
  - (d) the safety and security of buildings and the spaces around them
  - (e) accessibility to buildings
  - (f) the environmental protection policies of the development plan
  - (g) the community services policies of the development plan
- and having regard to all other matters raised.

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**Ward: Broad Green**

**PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**Lead Officer: Head of Planning Control**

**24 May 2007**

**Application No: 07/0962/P – Former Acacia filling station/warehouse,  
36 Pitlake, Croydon**

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**1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This is a full planning application for use of the building as place of worship with ancillary community related facilities. It is a major application comprising a change of use of a building with more than 1000sq.m of floor area.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 Grant planning permission subject to the conditions and reasons set out in the Agenda
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**3. BACKGROUND**

3.1 Site Description

- Occupied by a two-storey brick-built building with a flat roof and some external cladding on the front elevation. It is currently vacant (since mid-2001) but was last used as a warehouse and for the sale of motor spares. There is a parking area in the north-west corner of the site.
- Site area is 0.12ha

3.2 Surrounding Area

- Uses – predominantly residential, but there is a parade of shops and industrial properties to the north (The Pilton Estate) and commercial premises to the south and east of the site.
- Form - mainly two-storey.

3.3 Designations

- None

3.4 Relevant history

- 06/3990/P- use as a place of worship with ancillary community related facilities- refused on 22/02/07 on the ground that the development would result in the loss of an employment generating use contrary to Policy EM5 of the Croydon Plan.

3.5 Proposal

Full permission is sought for:-

- Change of use of whole building to a use Class D1 use (place of worship). The first floor would be used for worship and Sunday school classes, including offices for counselling, educational classes and the church. The ground floor would be used for youth and other community related activities, including mother and baby groups, and Senior Citizen's clubs.
- The building would be occupied by Potters House Christian Church, Croydon, who currently operate using the Fairfield Hotel in the town centre. They employ 2 full-time employees. The Church envisages this would rise to 3 full-time employees and a further 2-4 part-time employees if permission is granted. The educational classes would be run to help local unemployed people and give them improved life skills.
- The applicant has advised the Church was started six years ago and now has about 200 members and is part of a 40-plus group of Churches in the UK and 1400 worldwide. Members come from a wide range of socio-economic groupings and ethnic backgrounds.
- At present they have 3 services a week, 2 on Sunday in the morning and evening and 1 on Wednesday evening. The agent has indicated that there are about 190 people attending on Sunday morning, 140 on Sunday evening and the same number on Wednesday evening. Approximately 10% of these attendees are visitors, not being Church members.
- Six car parking spaces are shown in the north-west corner of the site, including two accessible spaces. The Church would also be willing to provide a "park & ride" shuttle mini-bus service from various railway stations if required.

#### **4. PLANNING POLICIES:**

- Replacement Unitary Development Plan: SP1, UD6-8, UD13, SP9-10, EP1-3, SP14, T2-4, T8, T11, SP15, EM5, SP27, CS1.
- SPG No. 9 – Places Of Worship

#### **5. CONSULTATIONS**

- Advertised as a Major application by press notice.
- 79 adjacent occupiers notified. 2 replies received.  
Main grounds of objection:
  1. lack of car parking for proposed use would lead to congestion in surrounding streets, leaving little choice for existing residents parking in the area
  2. already there are 5 Christian churches within half a mile radius of this site

#### **6. CONSIDERATIONS**

##### Use policies

- 6.1 Policy EM5 of the Replacement UDP protects existing employment uses on sites outside any designated Centre from alternative development unless the existing use harms residential amenity and it has been demonstrated that there is no demand for an appropriate alternative employment use. Acceptable alternative uses are for housing or community uses. However, alternative uses should not prejudice the continued use of adjacent employment sites.
- 6.2 It is considered that the existing use does not harm residential amenity and the proposal is for a community use which would not prejudice adjacent employment sites. In addition, evidence has now been put forward since the previous refusal to show that a robust marketing exercise has taken place for

five and a half years and therefore it is reasonable for the applicant to claim that there is a lack of demand for an appropriate alternative employment use. It would be acceptable to make an exception to Policy EM5 in this instance.

- 6.3 Policy CS1 of the Replacement UDP allows provision of new community facilities in locations if appropriate for the scale proposed. This site is accessible by a variety of modes of transport; the anticipated demand for car parking and increased traffic would not adversely affect residential amenity; and it would not cause unacceptable noise or disturbance to the character and amenities of surrounding residential areas.

Townscape issues

- 6.4 There would be no change to the external appearance of the proposed building, other than decorative (cleaning brickwork, painting the windows, and removing old signage). This would improve the general appearance of the building. In addition, the metal posts dotted around the car park would be removed, but no other new boundary treatment is proposed, due to the cost implications for the Church and the short-term nature of the letting.

Amenities of adjoining and nearby occupiers

- 6.5 Having regard to the design of the building with few external windows, and its location between 40-50m from the nearest residential properties, there would be no significant detrimental effect to the character or amenities of the surrounding residential area.

Highways and parking

- 6.6 The applicant has stated that the vast majority of the Church members travel to the existing hotel location by public transport and would continue to do this for the proposed new use. There are a maximum of 15 cars being used by members who would park in public car parks or metered bays. The proposal provides for 6 car parking spaces which could be used by church workers and disabled persons. Having regard to the high PTAL rating of 6a for the site, it is considered this level of car parking would be acceptable. There would be adequate space for manoeuvring of vehicles within the site.
- 6.7 There is a room on the ground floor which has been allocated for the storage of 10 bicycles.

**7. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 7.1 The proposal would make use of an existing "brownfield" site close to the town centre.

**8. EQUALITIES CONSIDERATIONS**

- 8.1 Two car parking spaces for disabled persons have been shown. Level Access would be secured under the Building Regulations.

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Case Officer: John Lawson  
Background Documents: 2 replies from nearby residential occupiers.  
Contact Officer: Mr. P. Mills 020 8760 5419