

Committee Date: 20.10.09

Honiton St Pauls
HONITON

09/1927/COU

Target Date: 19.11.2009

Applicant:

East Devon District Council

Location:

Elmfield House, Dowell Street, Honiton

Proposal:

Change of use of ground floor from B1 to D1 for use as an art gallery and installation of new French doors and basement window.

CONSULTATIONS

County Highway Authority

Does not wish to comment

South West Water

No comments received at the time of writing the report

Environment Agency

No comments received at the time of writing the report

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL

No comments received at the time of writing the report

WARD MEMBER(S)

No comments received at the time of writing the report

REPRESENTATIONS

Objections

No comments received at the time of writing the report

Support

No comments received at the time of writing the report

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

App.No:	Proposal	Decision	Date
96/P2046	Internal Alterations	Approved	17.02.1997
96/P2045	Change Of Use From Residential To Classes B1(Business) & D1 (Museum /art Gallery)	Approved	29.01.1997

PLANNING POLICIES

Devon Country Structure Plan (2001-2016)

Policy CO7- Historic Settlements and Buildings

East Devon Local Plan (1995-2011)

Policy D1 – Design and Local Distinctiveness

Policy EN9- Extension, alteration or change of use of buildings of special architectural and historic interest

Policy EN11- Preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas

Policy E3- Safeguarding employment land and premises

Policy C2- Local community facilities

Policy TO6- Provision of Visitor Attractions

SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The site refers to Elmfield House, a late Georgian/ early Victorian Grade II Listed Building situated within the built-up area boundary of Honiton. Located off Dowell Street within the designated Honiton Conservation Area, Elmfield House has been owned by East Devon District Council since 1995 following the death of the artist Thelma Hulbert.

The first floor of the building is currently in use as an art gallery, whilst the ground floor and basement are used as a registrar's office.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposal is for a change of use of the ground floor and basement of the premises to a D1 use as an extension to the art gallery and general alterations including the installation of new French doors and a basement window. These alterations and various internal alterations to the Grade II Listed Building are also the subject of a separate Listed Building Consent application 09/1910/LBC which is also on this agenda.

The gallery is currently unable to cater fully for the needs of its visitors and its desire to expand its educational programme with a view to reaching a wider audience is a reflection of its ongoing success.

CONSIDERATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

The main issues to consider in determining the application relate to of the impact of the loss of employment land and premises, the impact on the residential amenity of surrounding properties, the effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the Grade II Listed Building and surrounding Conservation Area and highway safety implications.

Background

In May 2008 EDDC's Arts Development service received a grant from Arts Council England and subsequently Capital funds from EDDC to convert the ground floor and basement of Elmfield House. From this, the EDDC Executive Board unanimously agreed the recommendation to expand the gallery and staffing to cover new activity throughout the whole building and ancillary areas. In order to secure the funds a tight deadline has to be adhered to and it is for this reason that the proposal for Phase 1 of the expansion of the art gallery is before members of the Development Management Committee, despite the fact that the consultation expiry date for the application is not until a day after the committee meeting (21st October 2009).

Highway Issues

The Highways Officer has no comments to make regarding the application. Elmfield House occupies a town centre location with good links to public transport. A large EDDC car park is located in close proximity to the art gallery and as such it is considered that there would be no significant highways issues associated with the change of use of the building.

Impact on Listed Buildings and Conservation Area

It is considered that the change of use of the building to an art gallery would not have a significant impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The existing use of the building as an art gallery is relatively low key and compatible with the character of the surrounding area. It is considered that the proposed expansion of the art gallery and associated intensification of the use of Elmfield House would not have any additional impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The proposed external alterations to the listed building relate to the replacement of an existing basement window and casement doors at ground floor level. Overall it is considered that the replacement windows and doors would not adversely affect the character and appearance of the property. More detailed consideration will be given to these changes in the accompanying listed building consent application 09/1910/LBC.

Safeguarding Employment Land and Premises

Whilst the proposal would result in a loss of a B1 use on the ground floor of the building, it is considered that the community and cultural benefits of allowing the expansion of the art gallery would far outweigh the loss of a small area of employment floor space. In any case, it could be considered that the premises are not best suited to a B1 use or entirely compatible with other uses within the building. The community benefits of the expansion have been described in the accompanying Design and Access statement in relation to the development of the gallery's educational programme for children and schools to families and older age groups. In addition, it is stated that further employment opportunities will be created with the two existing part time posts being extended by a day each and a new part time post created for three days which would provide the equivalent of 1 new full time post.

Impact on Residential Amenity

It is considered that owing to the degree of separation from the surrounding residential properties, the proposed change of use would not have a significant effect on residential amenity. It is however considered necessary to condition the use of the ground floor to that proposed, specifically as an art gallery, as other uses within Class D1 of the Use Classes Order could have the potential to create a greater level of disturbance.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, it is considered that the change of use of the ground floor and basement of Elmfield House would allow the continued development of the gallery which will provide numerous cultural and community benefits to visitors and residents of East Devon. The intensification of the use of the building would not have any significant impact on the character and appearance of the listed building or the Conservation Area and would not have any additional impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties. As such the application is recommended for approval subject to no material representations being received prior to the expiration of the consultation period.

RECOMMENDATION

Subject to no adverse comments being received by 21st October 2009, delegate to Head of Planning and Countryside, **APPROVE** subject to the following conditions:

1. TM3

2. The premises shall be used solely as an art gallery and for no other purpose (including any other purpose in Class D1 of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning Use Classes) Order 1987, or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification).

(Reason: To protect adjoining occupiers from potential noise and disturbance that might be generated by alternative uses).

Reasons for approval

1. CO7

2. D1, EN9, EN11, E3, C2, TO6

3, 4, 5, 17, 20, 22

Approved plans

687/PL/001, 687/PL/151, 687/PL/301, 687/PL/150, 687/PL/503, 687/PL/203, 687/PL/204