

Committee date	7 December 2021
Application reference Site address	21/01279/FUL – The Imam Hussein Foundation, 205 North Approach, WD25 0ES
Proposal	Retention of an infill canopy with front entrance doors (retrospective)
Applicant	Mr Nawrozzadeh
Agent	Sterling Town Planning
Type of Application	Full Planning Permission
Reason for committee Item	Number of Objections
Target decision date	14 January 2022
Statutory publicity	Neighbour letters
Case officer	Sam Oguz, sam.oguz@watford.gov.uk
Ward	Stanborough

1. Recommendation

- 1.1 That planning permission be granted subject to conditions, as set out in section 8 of this report.

2. Site and surroundings

- 2.1 The application site comprises a 0.18 hectare, rectangular plot of land located in the Stanborough Ward. The site, formerly, Kingswood Baptist Church, has been converted for use of The Imam Hussein Foundation and all buildings on site are associated to the foundation. There is a residential property on-site, 207 North Approach, this dwelling is occupied by the congregation leader. The site has various existing buildings on site of differing sizes and styles. It has a private car park at the front and the frontage is characterised by the former church building and associated house. The site borders both Kingsway Infant and Junior Schools on the southern elevations. The north-western side of the site is on North Approach and the north-eastern perimeter is adjoined by the residential dwelling at 201 North Approach. The site does have a secondary access from a service road to the rear off Briar Road. The rest of the surrounding area is characterised by typical two-storey semi-detached properties. Opposite the site is a row of mature deciduous trees which block the view from Kingsway North Orbital Road, these trees are not the subject of a Tree Preservation Order or impacted by this proposal.

- 1.2 The site is not in a conservation area nor does it affect the setting of a listed building.

3. Summary of the proposal

3.1 Proposal

This proposal seeks to retain the existing frontage and canopy erected between the main building and the associated house at 207 North Approach. The canopy has

entrance doors facing out onto North Approach and is made using wooden boards. The canopy is open at the rear and does not fully enclose the space.

3.2 Conclusion

The proposal is set back from the streetscene and does not have any significant impact on the visual amenity of the area, subject to the timber walls and doors being stained. The extension fits within the single storey nature of the site and causes no significant harm to the amenity of surrounding residential properties.

4. Relevant policies

- 4.1 Members should refer to the background papers attached to the agenda. These highlight the policy framework under which this application is determined. Specific policy considerations with regard to this particular application are detailed in section 6 below.

5. Relevant site history/background information

- 5.1 On the 20th February 2020 planning permission (ref: 19/01482/FUL) was granted for a side extension to be used as a kitchen space. The infill canopy will connect to this extension.

6. Main considerations

- 6.1 The main issues to be considered in the determination of this application are:
- (a) Principle of development
 - (b) Scale, design and impact on the character and appearance of the area
 - (c) Impact on neighbouring amenity
 - (d) Traffic, highways and parking impacts
- 6.2 (a) Principle of the development
- The current use of the site is a Class F1 place of worship. This has always been the use of the site and will remain unchanged by this development. It is considered that the works will include the enhancement of a community facility which is in accordance with the emerging policy HC12.3 of Watford's Final Draft Local Plan 2018-2036, this encourages the use and improvement of cultural community centres. The infill canopy has replaced previously underutilised space on the site. The canopy has not resulted in blocking off a section of the site, as there was previously a fence between the main building and 207 North Approach.
- 6.3 It is considered that that the principle of allowing the infill canopy would be appropriate and acceptable.
- 6.4 (b) Scale, design and impact on the character and appearance of the area
- The canopy is a relatively large extension when viewed from the front with a height of 3.7m. However, the frontage is does not have a prominent appearance within the

streetscene, being in line with the existing buildings, and is not in direct view from any residential property.

- 6.5 The rest of the site is made up of various single and two storey buildings. The canopy extension is subordinate in height when compared to these and would not be considered as overdevelopment of the site. The current wooden finish is lighter in colour than the rest of the frontage so a condition should be imposed that would require a darker stain applied to the wooden frontage to ensure it blends in with its surroundings. Overall, the proposal is not considered to significantly impact on the character and appearance of the site or surrounding area.

- 6.6 (c) Impact on neighbour amenity
The canopy itself will have no adverse impact on neighbouring amenity. There is no loss of private parking spaces as a result of the extension.

- 6.7 The canopy itself causes no loss of light and no loss of outlook to neighbouring residents given the enclosed nature of the proposal and the separation distance to boundaries.

- 6.8 (d) Traffic, highways and parking impacts
The current traffic, highways and parking impacts would be unchanged. The site retains the same level of private parking and the surrounding area is not covered by a controlled parking zone. Parking on North Approach is unrestricted and despite neighbour concerns, this development is unlikely to have any impact on parking issues.

7. Consultation responses received

7.1 Statutory consultees and other organisations

None.

7.2 Interested parties

Letters were sent to 20 properties in the surrounding area. Responses have been received from 7 nearby addresses. Of these responses all 7 were objections.

The application was also advertised using a site notice posted on 3rd September 2021.

The main comments are summarised below, the full letters are available to view online on the Council's website:

Comments	Officer response
Parking issues on site resulting in spill over to North Approach and Briar Road	See paragraph 6.8 of this report.

Noise pollution from events carried out at the site	The canopy itself is unlikely to contribute to an increase in noise disturbances. The canopy may in fact enclose activity within the site reducing the potential for noise. The Council's Environmental Health team can be contacted if noise levels are deemed to be excessive.
Impact to the character and appearance of the area	See paragraphs 6.4- 6.5 of this report.
Loss of light and outlook to residential dwellings	See paragraphs 6.6-6.7 of this report.
Overdevelopment of the site	The site currently has a number of buildings, this canopy does not protrude the front building line and despite infilling the area between the residential property on-site, the canopy is not considered an over-development of the site.
Intended use of the canopy	Many objections state the canopy is used as a function room. However, the canopy is open walled and is clearly separated from the main service area. Therefore, it would be regarded the primary use of the canopy would be as an entrance/meeting area for worshipers. This is ancillary to the main use of the centre and doesn't increase the functional use space of the facility.
Smell of cooking late into the night	The canopy does not contain any cooking facilities within it, therefore this is not a planning consideration and not relevant to this application.
Frustration about the site already having one application being granted retrospectively	Whilst the frustration is understood this is not a relevant consideration of this application and retrospective applications are still judged equally against planning policy.
The addition of a white plastic frontage	The white frontage on the canopy was a temporary installation and has since been removed.
Loss of privacy as a result of usage of the service road at the rear of gardens on North Approach	The canopy itself is unlikely to contribute to the use of this service road. The use of the service road is a civil matter.
Land Registry covenants	Any existing covenants still apply, however they are not relevant considerations as part of the planning process.

8. Recommendation

8.1 That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

Conditions

1. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawings, unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The following drawings are hereby approved:

- Drawing Number: 205NA/01
- Drawing Number: 205NA/02
- Drawing Number: 205NA/03
- Drawing Number: 205/NASP

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and the interests of proper planning.

2. Within 1 month from the date of this permission, details of the colour of a timber stain to be applied to the walls and doors of the canopy frontage facing North Approach shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved stain shall be applied within 2 months of being approved and shall be retained at all times.

Reason: In the interests of the visual appearance of the site.