

## UPDATE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

ITEM NO. 11

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 7<sup>th</sup> October 2020

Ward: Whitley

App No.: 191265

Address: St. Pauls, Whitley Wood Lane, RG2 8PN

Proposal: Redevelop the site, creating a new Church Centre building, comprising Cafe, Worship Area, Meeting Rooms, two one bed residential flats and also a Health Centre Building.

Applicant: The PCC of St. Paul's Church, Whitley

Deadline: 3/6/20

Extended Deadline: 27/11/20

Planning Guarantee 26 week target: 2/9/20

### RECOMMENDATION:

As in the main report.

#### 1. AMENDED INFORMATION

##### *Written Statements*

- 1.1 Alok Sharma MP has submitted a written statement in support of the proposal. The agent, DLK Architects, has also submitted a written statement. These are in lieu of speaking at committee. These are both included in the appendices below.

##### *Ash Tree - Ecological Survey*

- 1.2 A further visual survey has been undertaken of the Ash tree close to the southern boundary, which would be removed as part of the proposed scheme, to determine whether it has the potential to host a bat roost. The survey confirmed that there is no evidence of bats (current or historically) and no visible potential roosting features, which could be used by bats. RBC's Ecologist has confirmed that the bat survey has been undertaken by a licensed bat surveyor to an appropriate standard and as it is very unlikely that the tree hosts a bat roost there should be no bat related constraints to removing the tree and no further survey is required.

##### *Access*

- 1.3 Amended plans have been submitted by the agent which include for reconfigured internal layout within the church building, so that there would be access from the lift as well as the stairs to the proposed first floor flats.

- 1.4 This would accord with Policy H5.

##### *Conclusion*

- 1.5 The recommendation remains as in the main report.

## **APPENDIX 1: WRITTEN STATEMENT FROM THE AGENTS - DLK ARCHITECTS**

DLK  
ARCHITECTS

This is a Community scheme, proposed by St Paul's Parish church and the local GPs to provide two buildings which will together support the local community in Whitley Wood, in one of the more deprived and needy parts of our town.

**The church** offer a range of support and resources in the area but they do this from a set of ageing and sub-standard buildings positioned on the site.

**The local GPs** are looking to combine practices in a new centre which again will replace other buildings currently in use by them which are sub-standard.

The proposal is for a new church and community building at the front of the site and a new medical centre to the rear with shared access and parking arrangements.

There have been previous iterations of this scheme and previous pre-application enquiries made.

But the moment for this scheme is now.

Medical funding is currently available to enable the development of the surgery building in the scheme.

The land for the surgery will be leased to the GPs by the Parish for their development in an agreement already drafted and ready. As a result, the Parish will be able to provide their own updated accommodation for the community.

Please give this scheme your support, there is a window of opportunity now which will not always be open. After many years of trying, this is the time that this scheme can be made to work.

There follows a statement from the Parish about their own proposal ...



Chiltern Chambers 37 St Peter's Avenue Caversham Reading RG4 7DH  
Tel: 0118 944 9856 Email: enquiries@dlkarchitects.com  
Web: www.dlkarchitects.com

Daniel Leilott Krauze Limited - Registered in England No. 2744532 - Trading As DLK Architects

*Our vision is to realise the potential of the site to be a community hub that will bring well-being to the people of the neighbourhood.*

*The Church Centre will have:*

- Flexible, accessible and inclusive space for worship, social events and soft play*
- Hall with independent facilities, suitable for potentially vulnerable groups, e.g. nurseries and caring for those with addictions, disabilities or mental health problems*
- Café*
- Small meeting/office rooms*
- Dedicated quiet chapel, open to all*
- Two one-bedroom flats.*

*Our aim is to provide services that meet the priority 'well-being' needs of the local community. Over time these could include the provision of information, advice and support on a wide range of personal issues such as debt management, housing, relationship problems and bereavement. In doing this, we will ensure our activities are closely co-ordinated with those of the Whitley Wood Community Centre.*

*We are currently working with Shift Youth & Community with the aim of SYC basing their activities at the St Paul's site. SYC are a registered Christian charity made up of trained youth and community workers committed to helping entire communities thrive. They work to increase social cohesion and build social capital, specifically by empowering community members to shape culture positively by adopting life affirming values. They have been working closely with the Parish and other agencies working in Whitley and Whitley Wood, since 2014. Currently their work is focused in the Sixth Form at the John Madejski Academy and on developing covid-safe models for engaging the broader community.*



## APPENDIX 2: WRITTEN STATEMENT FROM ALOK SHARMA MP

**Rt Hon Alok Sharma, MP for Reading West**



**HOUSE OF COMMONS**

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Planning Applications Committee  
Reading Borough Council

(Sent by email to: [Planning.Administrations@reading.gov.uk](mailto:Planning.Administrations@reading.gov.uk))

1 October 2020  
Our ref: JI/AS66168

Dear Members of the Planning Applications Committee,

**Re: Planning Application Ref: 191265**

In September last year I met with Rev Sue Cady of St Agnes with St Paul and St Barnabas, based in my constituency.

During our meeting, Rev Sue informed me of plans to redevelop the site of St Paul's on Whitley Wood Lane. The proposals seek to create a new community building to include a cafe, multi-purpose community areas, meeting rooms, two one-bed residential flats, along with a health centre. A new church facility will also be built.

I understand that the redevelopment will deliver much-needed and improved primary care facilities in the local area whilst also providing space for community usage and church activities.

During my visit, I was impressed with the outreach work the church undertakes and the fact that the redevelopment delivers a new healthcare facility should be welcomed.

Therefore, I would be grateful for the Planning Applications Committee to take this written statement into consideration.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Yours sincerely,

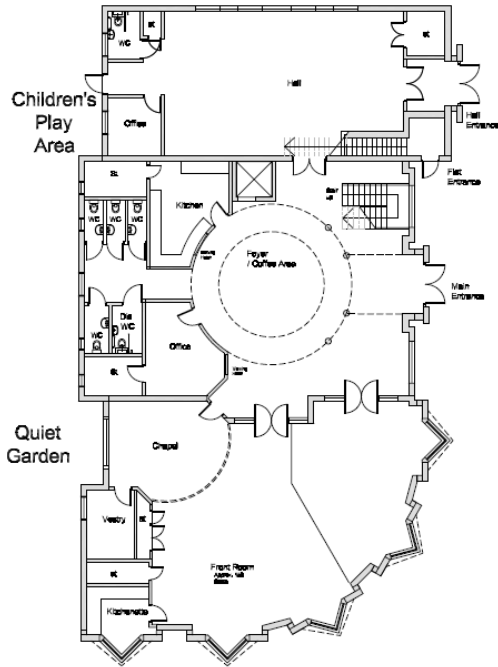
A black rectangular box redacting the signature of Alok Sharma.

**Alok Sharma MP**

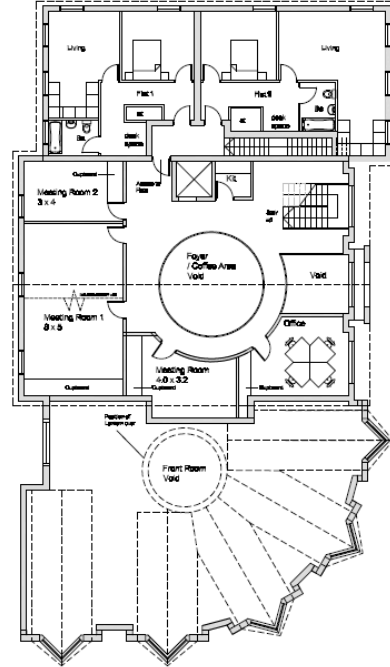
# APPENDIX 3: PLANS

## Floor Plans

### Church Building



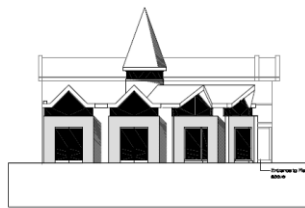
Church  
Ground Floor Plan



Church  
First Floor Plan

## Elevations

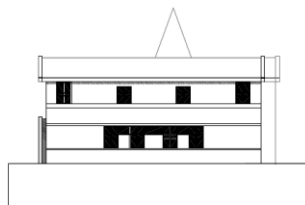
### Church Building



Church  
West Elevation (along Whitley wood Lane)



Church  
South Elevation (along Site)



Church  
East Elevation



Church  
North Elevation