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Brethren hall wins consent

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A Brethren Church hall proposed for a small residential street in Stoke has been given the thumbs up by the city council, but the thumbs down from some neighbours.

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The Nelson City Council's approval of a resource consent application by the Maitland Hall Trust to build the hall at 7 Towai St had been criticised by neighbours who fear they will be disrupted by early morning Sunday services held at the hall.

The hall would be used by between 30 and 50 parishioners for services at 6am on Sundays and 6pm on Mondays, and "occasionally" house between 70 to 100 people for services on Friday nights and Sunday afternoons.

The council granted the consent last week subject to conditions, including that the hall only be used for religious services.

In its decision, the council said the construction of the building and the church services were "unlikely" to have more than a minor effect on neighbours.

It also believed that screen planting and walls would ensure that noise would be "contained on the site, and will not disturb the residential amenity of the neighbourhood".

But Julie Jackson, who lives next to the site, said noise early on a Sunday morning would be disruptive in the quiet cul-de-sac.

She said she was disappointed that while the planner's report to the council had recommended imposing a condition that no church activity start before 8am on Sunday mornings, the council decision had included no such requirement.

"They've gone ahead and said yes without giving any reasons," she said.

"You really want to put it back to the council and say, `How would you feel if you had something going on at 6am on a Sunday morning next to your residential property?'"

She also believed the resource consent application should have been publicly notified, because some residents in the street still did not know about the proposed hall.

Nelson City Council applications committee chairman Ian Barker said the "small scale" operation proposed

had worked well in other areas of Nelson, and the committee unanimously felt the effects of noise and traffic had been mitigated enough by the consent conditions that an 8am restriction was not needed.

Most of the parishioners lived within 250m of the site, so would walk to the church, he said.

Mr Barker said because the proposed activity was only small, staff only notified people it was thought would be affected.

The consent could be reviewed in six months' time, he said.

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