



Historic England

Mr Declan Cleary

Direct Dial:

High Peak Borough Council

PO Box 136

Our ref: L01561949

Buxton

Derbyshire

SK17 1AQ

7 July 2023

Dear Mr Cleary

Arrangements for Handling Heritage Applications Direction 2021

**CHINLEY CHAPEL, UNNAMED ROAD FROM A624 TO MALCOFF, THE WASH,
CHAPEL-EN-LE-FRITH, DERBYSHIRE**

Application No. HPK/2023/0140

Thank you for your letter of 20 June 2023 regarding the above application for listed building consent. On the basis of the information available to date, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the application.

Historic England Advice

Historic England have concerns regarding the proposed removal of box pew benches from the interior of the chapel which represents less than substantial harm to the significance of the listed chapel. Furthermore, the application does not include sufficient information to allow suitable determination of the application.

Chinley Independent Chapel is one of the earliest buildings in the settlement of Chapel Milton, built on the edge of the development during the early 18th century. The chapel was built in approximately 1711 following the need for a purpose-built chapel for the non-conformist congregation set up in 1662 by William Bagshaw, entitled the 'Apostle



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of the Peak'. The building is likely to be associated with the Sunday School, Old Manse and Manse Cottage. The interior of the chapel reflects the architectural style of the first quarter of the 18th century. The historic box pews are still extant across the ground floor of the building facing toward the pulpit in the centre of one elevation. The upper floors, accessed by a timber staircase, are supported by iron columns with timber raised and fielded panels to the balustrade topped by a cornice and with a dentil decoration below. Overall, the interior is subtle yet striking in its detail. For these reasons it has been listed as Grade II*, one of the top 8% of listed buildings in England.

The proposed removal of two of the existing box pews constitutes less than substantial harm to the significance of Chinley Chapel. The box pews are probably contemporary with the construction of the chapel in 1711, they are a notable feature in the building and constitute part of the surviving interior which is of remarkable quality. It is noted from the Heritage Impact Assessment that these pews have possibly been relocated in the chapel, however, they remain extant, and this is the foundation of their significance.

Historic England does not object to the need of the chapel in creating accessible seating and space to accommodate all members of the congregation and visitors, however, the removal of these pews would result in a detrimental loss to the character of the building and a negative impact upon its significance.

The application does not include a Heritage Impact Assessment which provides an appropriate assessment of the significance of the Grade II* listed chapel as well as the significance of the interior features which includes the box pews. Furthermore, the assessment of the proposed formation of accessible seating does not include alternative options to their removal or a contextual understanding of the space to support why this is the only location for the proposed seating.

Your authority should determine the application on the basis of a sound assessment of the significance of the chapel and its interior, including the contribution the significance of the building. This should be considered in conjunction with alternative options for providing accessible seating. The relevant parts of the National Planning Policy Framework include paragraphs of 194 and 195 for the sufficiency of assessment, and paragraphs 197, 199 and 202 for consideration of the justification, great weight and balance against public benefits.

Historic England have concerns regarding the removal of the two 18th century box pews which are an important element in the architectural and historic significance of the chapel. The need for accessibility in this building is acknowledged, however, a proper assessment of the significance of the building and pews, as well as options for alternatives to removal should be provided in order for the local authority to make a balanced decision.



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Recommendation

Historic England has concerns regarding the application on heritage grounds.

We consider that the issues and safeguards outlined in our advice need to be addressed in order for the application to meet the requirements of paragraphs 194, 195, 197, 199, 202 of the NPPF.

Your authority should take these representations into account and seek amendments, safeguards or further information as set out in our advice. If there are any material changes to the proposals, or you would like further advice, please contact us.

Yours sincerely

Molly Edwards

Molly Edwards

Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas

E-mail:



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