

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

HPK/2024/0090
Valid 08/03/2024

**TOWN END METHODIST
CHURCH MARKET STREET
CHAPEL-EN-LE-FRITH**

**CHANGE OF USE OF THE
REAR, ANCILLIARY, PART OF
TOWN END METHODIST
CHURCH INTO A HOLIDAY
LET.**

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Tourism
- Heritage Impact
- Design & Appearance
- Residential Amenity

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

Town End Methodist Church is Grade II listed building which dates from c. 1874. The listing description notes the external appearance comprising Rock-faced, coursed, squared gritstone, Gritstone dressings and quoins and slate roof. The buildings key features noted in the listing description include: gable nave, spired tower, stepped buttresses and contemporary stained glass.

The building has been subject to some alterations over the years, the most significant being the addition of an extension to the front of building to provide an entrance foyer, café and toilets (ref. HPK/0002/6228). A single storey extension was added to the southern elevation at some stage which comprises a kitchen.

The Church is situated to the south of Market Street, centrally with Chapel-en-le-Frith town centre. It is located in the Town End Conservation Area. Footpath 116 runs down the eastern side of the church, between the church and the Wesley Court properties, and provides access to the Town End Community Garden which is managed by the Methodist Church.

PROPOSAL

The proposal involves conversion of ancillary accommodation to rear of the church to a holiday let. The existing accommodation comprises vestry and kitchen areas at ground floor and two rooms currently used for storage on the first floor. The proposal would comprise kitchen, living room, wet room and bedroom at ground floor level. At first floor level two further bedrooms and a bathroom are proposed.

Some internal alterations are proposed including the removal of some partitions, the most significant being opening up an original external wall on the southern elevation

that adjoins the kitchen. Alterations are proposed to the existing kitchen window arrangements including widening an existing, and reinstating another, opening and blocking up two smaller openings. New partition walls are proposed to create the ground floor wet room and first floor bathroom.

Access arrangements will be improved with a level threshold and a widened wheelchair accessible entrance. The accommodated would be insulated throughout and secondary glazing installed. Two of the upstairs windows are proposed to be replaced with slimline double glazing. A new skylight would be added to the kitchen roof.

Externally minor alterations are proposed to the hardstanding to the rear of the building to create a private terrace area, bike and bin storage and a car parking space.

The application has been submitted following pre-application planning advice.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Policy S1: Sustainable Development Principles

Policy S1a: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy S2: Settlement Hierarchy

Policy S6: Central Sub- area strategy

Policy EQ1: Climate Change

Policy EQ2: Landscape Character

Policy EQ6: Design and Place Making

Policy EQ7: Built and Historic Environment

Policy E6: Promoting Peak District Tourism and Culture

Policy CF5: Provision and Retention of Local Community Service and Facilities

Policy CF6: Accessibility and Transport

Policy H3: New Housing Development

Chapel en-le Frith Neighbourhood Development Plan

Policy TM1: Promoting Tourism

Policy TC2: Mixed Use in the Town Centre

Policy TR1: Information required to support planning applications

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)

High Peak Design Guide SPD 2018

The SPD seeks to promote high quality design and identifies the overarching principles in securing good design. The document provides further detail to the policies relating to Design and Place Making and achieving high quality development within the High Peak area.

National Planning Policy Framework

Chapter 1 - Achieving Sustainable Development
Chapter 12 – Achieving well-designed and beautiful places
Chapter 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

The site has been subject to numerous applications over the years, some for very minor works, the most relevant include:

HPK/0003/8735 - Infill Extension And Alterations To Roof Of Outbuilding – Approved 18.02.2000

HPK/0002/6229 - Demolition Of Existing Porch. Replacement With Larger Extension To Create More Accommodation – Approved 22.04.988

HPK/0002/6228 - 2-storey Extn. To Form Entrance Porch, Reception & Meeting Rooms Etc. To Replace Extg. Porch On North Elev., Incl. External Works & Parking Area – Approved 22.04.1988

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 11.04.24
Neighbour consultation period ends: 11.04.24
Press Advert: 11.04.24

Public Comments

22 letters of support have been received and in summary the main points they raise:

- Church provides valuable outreach support including community café, charity shop and community garden for a range of community groups involving young and older residents.
- The development of an accessible holiday let, in an underutilised Church building, will provide a valuable, regular source of funding to underpin the community offer.
- A very worthwhile proposal that will allow the church to diversify the use of its building and secure its future for the years to come during very challenging times when we are seeing a lot of churches close
- A similar Holiday Let project, at Fernilee Methodist Church, has been fully booked since it opened and has fulfilled its promise of income generation to support its wider, not just Church community.
- Tourism will bring income to the local community.
- The holiday accommodation seeks to make the downstairs assessable for people with mobility issues.

One objection has been received from a resident of Wesley Court. They have raised concerns about increased traffic and car parking and the disruption caused by the short term occupancy of a holiday let.

Chapel PC Comments - Unanimously support this application.

Chinley, Buxworth & Brownside Parish Council - supports this application

Environmental Health

No objection and recommend the following condition regarding sound proofing:

No part of the development hereby permitted shall be brought into use until full details of a sound insulation scheme has been submitted to and approved, in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall adequately demonstrate a system of sound insulation between commercial and residential uses, that is designed to achieve an airborne sound insulation value of no less than:

- Airborne Sound Insulation 53 DnT,w+Ctr dB
- Impact Sound Insulation 64 L'nT,w dB

The approved scheme shall then be implemented prior to the permission being brought into use, to the written satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority, and maintained in use for the life of the development.

Conservation Officer

This proposal must be accompanied by a Listed Building Consent application as it proposes substantial and invasive works, new materials, new construction methodology, new layout, new windows, new services to be included and many other items. It also doesn't cover in any great detail the existing condition of the building, and the survived items of significance to be retained, as there is not a schedule of historic fabric or room/area significance overlay accompanying the heritage statement. Items are mentioned in the listing description but not identified here at any level. A brief summary of what '*will*' happen per room is not acceptable.

Heating and insulation has been mentioned briefly, however actual heating services and infrastructure is not considered. A primitive vernacular church such as this was never domestic in infancy. Its conversion must have the building fabric and its integrity in mind, a conversion to a new and alien function will be invasive. I do not feel that there are enough details at this stage to assess, neither has a conclusion of heritage harm been assessed or explained in the application.

At this stage features such as skylights, terrace, parking, bike area and bins stores are not supported due to the lack of details, and the lack of assessment or acknowledgement of Setting. These items are not traditional, nor is there a precedent for them. I am concerned they appear to be 'shoe-horned' into the rear of the building, with the terrace overlooking the graveyard. This is quite uncomfortable and does not appear respectful. Consequently, a more considered approach is expected in order to mitigate harm on the historic interest and character of the building, whilst respecting its merits, heritage values and meaning for listing designation.

Lastly to conclude, this Methodist Church is directly opposite another Listed Building: Methodist Junior School Grade II. There is historic association between the two, and both share Setting and character in particularly good survival condition. Impact on the neighbouring Listed Building is not considered as part of the application and should

be as part of the Heritage Impact assessment. The wider vicinity is exposed along Market Street, subsequently the two listed buildings are afforded a sense of place, and a sense of approach. The simplicity of the vernacular and historic interest is legible.

To conclude: It is assessed the proposals would fail to preserve the special interest of the listed building, contrary to Section 16 (2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. In addition it is seen the proposals would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, contrary to Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. With regards to the NPPF (2023) the harm would be less than substantial. With lack of detail and clear and convincing justification for this harm, the scheme cannot be supported. At this time it is not considered there are clear public benefits to outweigh the heritage harm identified. I cannot provide full support and recommend refusal.

DCC Archaeology

Market Street Wesleyan Church is a Grade II listed building which sits within the Chapel-En-Le-Frith conservation area (DDR 7093). While I am certain there will be no archaeological impacts you should contact your own Buildings and Conservation Officer for their view on this application.

Derbyshire County Council Highways

No objection

DCC PROW Team

We can advise that Chapel-en-le -Frith Public Footpath No. 116 runs along the access through the proposed development site, as shown on the attached plan. The path runs along the lane that gives vehicular access to residences. Consideration should be given to the safety of path users during construction, including any necessary signage to mitigate risks to path users. Private rights must not derogate the rights of the public to use the path.

The Rights of Way Section has no objection to the proposals as it appears that the route will be ultimately unaffected by the proposed works. I should be grateful however if you would advise the applicant as follows: -

- The footpath must remain open, unobstructed and on its legal alignment.
- There should be no disturbance to the path surface without prior authorisation from the Rights of Way Section.
- Consideration should be given to the safety of members of the public using the path during and after the works. A temporary closure of paths will be permitted on application to DCC where the path remains unaffected on completion of the development.
- There should be no encroachment of the path, and no fencing should be installed without consulting the Rights of Way section

DCC LLFA

Derbyshire LLFA are only responding to Major planning applications.

Historic England

We suggest that you seek the views of your specialist conservation and archaeological advisers.

Historic Buildings and Places (Ancient Monuments Society)

Our only adverse comment is over the secondary glazing. It is surely not necessary in such comparatively small spaces and it will greatly impede appreciation of the single most interesting feature in the holiday let - the impressive wheel window. It is bound to make access for cleaning and repair considerably more difficult. The proportion of solid to void is modest so heat loss in the Winter will be limited whilst the two glazing skins could render the room lit by the wheel very uncomfortable in the Summer.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

The site is located centrally within Chapel-en-le-frith town centre and therefore the site is within a sustainable location with good access to shops, facilities and public transport.

In planning terms the use of church is classified as F1 (learning and non residential institutions) and the vestry and storage areas, which the proposal relates to, would be considered ancillary to the main use.

Local Plan Policy CF5 supports proposals which protect, retain or enhance existing community facilities (including multi use and shared schemes) or provide new facilities. As explained in the accompanying DAS, the proposal would help to cross subsidise the church and ensure its longevity for the future. Reference has also been made to the Methodist Chapel at Fernilee which had planning permission granted to convert the vestry into holiday let accommodation to cross-subsidise the running of the chapel (ref. HPK/2020/0081). The proposal would therefore be in accordance with local plan policy CF5 which seeks to protect and sustain existing community facilities.

Policy E6 promotes tourism in the High Peak and the policy supports proposal for additional visitor accommodation with a preference for accommodation to be located in more sustainable location, such as towns and villages. The proposals fulfils the requirements of policy E6 by providing more tourist accommodation in Chapel-en-le-Frith, a sustainable location with shops and facilities within walking distance and a location where sustainable transport options are available. Neighbourhood plan policy TM1 also supports tourism in Chapel-en-le-Frith.

It is recommended that a condition be imposed to ensure that it is used for holiday let accommodation rather than permanently occupied residential accommodation. This is because tourism accommodation provides greater economic benefits due to increased local spending and we would therefore want it to remain in this use. Moreover, the proposed floor space falls just below NDSS standards and it therefore not suitable for a permanent dwelling.

Heritage Impact

As the Methodist Church is Grade II listed building and located in the Town End Conservation Area, Heritage is a key consideration in assessing the acceptability of the proposals.

Ordinarily, a local planning authority would require listed building consent for works to listed building but the church benefits from Ecclesiastical Exemption and listed building consent process is being dealt with by the Methodist Listed Building Advisory Committee. A meeting was held on 30th August 2024 to discuss the proposals and the Methodist Conservation Officer has confirmed that they have no objection to the principle of the development. Following the meeting, the Methodist Church issued their decision notice under The Ecclesiastical Exemption (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (England) Order 2010 on 11th September 2024.

The objection from the Conservation Officer is noted but these comments were made without the benefit of a site visit or knowledge of the pre-application discussions. Some of the Conservation Officer's comments are made in relation to historic internal detailing which is not within the planning application's remit and is for the Methodist Conservation Officer to determine as part of the LBC process. The planning application can only look at the acceptability of the use and any external design and detailing.

The matter of secondary glazing was discussed at the meeting on 30th August and it was confirmed that these proposals would be removed from the application and attention would be focused on improving the insulation of the building, which is detailed in the LBC application.

In terms of external changes to the building, these are minimal and largely relate to fenestration changes on the rear (south) elevation in the kitchen extension, which is a later addition to the Church. The south elevation is to rear of the church tucked away from the streetscene and wider conservation area views. These changes improve the current fenestration arrangement and therefore sustain the visual character of the wider conservation area.

It is concluded that the proposals would not give cause heritage harm to either the listed building or conservation area and accord with Policy EQ7 which seeks to preserve and enhance the built and historic environment.

Design

Policies S1 and EQ6 of the adopted Local Plan seeks to ensure that development is well designed and of a high quality that responds positively to its environment whilst contributing towards local distinctiveness and a sense of place. New development should take account of the distinct character, townscape and setting of the area and secure high quality and locally distinctive design and amenity. These policies reflect guidance contained within the NPPF and particularly paragraph 131 which recognises the importance of creating high quality buildings and places, with good design being a key aspect of sustainable development.

The adopted Supplementary Planning Document on Residential Design 2005 also provides guidance on the approach to new residential development, and the factors which contribute toward local distinctiveness.

The SPD Residential Design Guidance 2005 recognises the need to ensure that new development is accessible to everyone and the importance of creating places which are welcoming and inclusive. The adopted High Peak Design Guide 2018 sets out that new development should follow the pattern of development within a settlement and contain a variety of building forms which reflect the rhythm, balance and palette of materials of the surrounding area.

The layout of the accommodation has a logical format and flow, with the existing kitchen area remaining as a kitchen, a bedroom provided at ground floor level which is intended to be wheelchair accessible. The Council does not have any space standards applicable to tourism accommodation but applies the National Described Space Standard to permanent C3 residential accommodation. The accommodation whilst sufficiently spacious as a holiday let, would fall just below the floorspace standards of the NDSS.

Improvements to the existing layout include partial removal of a partition on the first floor which currently obscures the full view of the rose window. This is a welcome improvement to the current arrangement.

The proposals follow the design principles of local plan policy EQ6, High Peak Design Guide 2018, National Design Guide and the NPPF.

Amenity

LP Policy EQ6 requires all new development to have a satisfactory relationship with existing land and buildings and protects the amenity of the area, which includes residential amenity of neighbouring properties. Aspects of residential amenity include impacts such as a loss of sunlight, overshadowing and overbearing impacts, loss of outlook, and loss of privacy.

The site plans shows that a private amenity area could be created adjacent to the kitchen which would provide the occupants with an opportunity to sit outside. This is considered a positive addition to the proposals as IY will provide amenity space for the occupants.

The proposals include measures to install soundproofing to ensure that the residential occupiers would not be disturbed by the church and vice versa.

Minor alterations are proposed to the fenestration but it is not significant to raise concerns regarding amenity impacts as the windows are in the position as existing and at ground floor level, the number of windows has also been reduced.

It is noted that one of the residents of Wesley Court has objected to the proposals and are concerned that the use would be disruptive. However, the proposed holiday accommodation use will still be a secondary use to the main use as a church, which currently has numerous comings and goings relating to the various community uses.

The proposals are not considered to be of a significant scale to cause disturbance to neighbouring residents. Indeed holiday let accommodation is essentially a form of residential use which is still within use class C3 and therefore by definition should be compatible to its surroundings. There is no cause to believe that the proposed holiday use would be disturbing to the neighbouring residents.

The proposals therefore satisfies the amenity considerations of local plan Policy EQ6.

Highway Safety

LP Policy CF6 seeks to ensure that development can be safely accessed in a sustainable manner and that all new development is located where it can be satisfactorily accommodated within the existing highway network and provides suitable off-street parking provision in accordance with guidelines set out under Appendix 1 of the Local Plan.

The Highway Authority raises no objection to the proposal.

The site plan also shows that two of the existing car parking spaces would be reserved for the holiday accommodation. This accords with Policy CF6 which seeks 2 car parking spaces for holiday accommodation which is 3 bedrooms or more

Cycle storage is also provided which is also a requirement of policy CF6. The site is also accessible by sustainable means of transport and is close to bus stops and walkable to town centre facilities. This all reduces the need for the occupants to drive and will most likely reduce traffic movements as a car isn't a necessity if you stay here unlike tourist accommodation in rural locations.

Other matters

It is noted that Environmental Health has requested a condition on sound proofing. However, this is a matter that is being dealt with as part of Building Regulations procedures and also the Ecclesiastical Exemption consent process.

The Ecclesiastical Exemption (LBC) consent applied the following conditions.

1. No works to install the following shall take place until design (at 1/20 scale) details and/or a specification have been submitted to and approved by the Methodist Church's Conservation Officer. The works shall then be carried out in complete accordance with the approved details and shall be retained thereafter:

- a. Proposed Sound proofing and Insulation;*
- b. New external vents, soil pipes, redecoration, heating, lighting details*
- c. Specification for any new plaster;*
- d. Details of the new skylight;*
- e. Details of the new ramp, including the choice of stone for the wall and ramp and the associated railings;*
- f. Details of the new portable screens;*
- g. Details of the new sink in the main church space;*
- h. Details of the proposed window protection;*

- i. Specification for the structural changes as a consequence of wall removal/alteration;*
- j. New stair and handrail; and*
- k. Details of any repairs required as part of the conversion works, including to any existing wainscoting or to the fabric of the building.*

Reason: That the proposal complies with the relevant planning policy and legislation in regard to the desirability to preserve or enhance the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building.

2. Notwithstanding the submitted plans the two sanctuary doors are to be retained and the existing external doors are to be retained in situ and repainted.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt.

3. Notwithstanding the submitted plans the secondary glazing to the wheel window shall be omitted.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt.

This application for planning permission is being recommended for approval cognisant of the Ecclesiastical Exemption (LBC) consent process and therefore there is not a need to replicate all the above cited conditions in the planning decision notice. It is more appropriate that they are dealt by Methodist Church Conservation Officer who has more exact experience with the detailing. However, condition 2 and 3 have been imposed for consistency as they relate to details on the plans which have agreed to be superseded through discussions.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The proposals provide an opportunity for the applicant's to put an underused space into an active commercial use as holiday let accommodation. Local plan policies promote tourism, particularly in sustainable locations such as the application site, which has good access to local facilities and public transport options.

The proposals are considered appropriate to the listed building and conservation area. The requisite Ecclesiastical Exemption (LBC) consent process has been sought and recently approved which addresses matters of heritage detailing.

To conclude the proposals satisfy local plan policies: S1, S1a, EQ6, EQ7, E6, CF5 and CF6, neighbourhood plan policies: TM1 and TC2 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : Approve

Case Officer: Rosie Dinnen

Recommendation Date: 13.09.24

X *J. Colley*

Signed by: Jane Colley Signature

On behalf of High Peak Borough Council