

Item No. 16**SCHEDULE B**

APPLICATION NUMBER	CB/10/04366/FULL
LOCATION	Heath And Reach Methodist Church, Heath Green, Heath And Reach, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 0AB
PROPOSAL	Conversion of chapel to form a single dwelling with no parking provided including part demolition of rear single storey structures to provide amenity space, reinstatement of bricked-up windows, replacement of entrance doors, insertion of 2 roof lights to the main roof and construction of metal flue to rear elevation.
PARISH	Heath & Reach
WARD	Plantation
WARD COUNCILLORS	Cllrs Peter Rawcliffe & Alan Shadbolt
CASE OFFICER	James Clements
DATE REGISTERED	06 December 2010
EXPIRY DATE	31 January 2011
APPLICANT	Miss S Berchielli
AGENT	Project Design Studio Ltd
REASON FOR COMMITTEE TO DETERMINE	Called-in by Councillor Alan Shadbolt
RECOMMENDED DECISION	Full Application - Granted

Site Location:

The proposal site is located at the former Wesleyan Methodist Chapel at Heath Green, Heath and Reach, Leighton Buzzard, which is Victorian building within the settlement of Heath and Reach and within the Heath and Reach Conservation Area.

The main building is two-storey with a single-storey element to the rear. The building is symmetrical with its ridge running perpendicular to the highway frontage with two small transepts/wings (containing staircases) to the east and west. The main elevation facing the Green has three bricked up windows and a number of stone plaques set into it. The building is constructed predominately with buff/grey brick with red/brown brick detailing to the arches, string-courses, eaves and verges. Both the main roof and the wings have a slate roof.

The Methodist church is located in a prominent location on high ground adjacent to the northern end of Heath Green which slopes from north to south. The building is set back 1.3m from the adjacent highway and is bound by a dwarf brick wall. The proposal site shares a common boundary to the west with no.2 Lanes End and to the west with no.4 Heath Green. The building fills the plot and there is little space around it. To the south of the highway on the Green is a parking area which can accommodate approximately 3-4 cars.

The Methodist Church was deconsecrated circa 2007 and has been marketed for reuse since this time. An application for conversion to four flats was submitted in 2010. This was withdrawn following objection from the Highway Officer.

The building is starting to show some signs of decay and Ivy and foliage has started to grow up the building.

The Application:

Permission is sought for the conversion of the chapel (Use Class D1) to form a single dwelling with no parking provided including part demolition of rear single storey structures to provide a pergola and amenity space, reinstatement of bricked-up windows, replacement of entrance doors, insertion of 2 roof lights to the main roof and construction of metal flue to rear elevation.

RELEVANT POLICIES:

National Policies (PPG & PPS)

PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development
PPS5 Historic Environment
PPG13 Transport

Regional Spatial Strategy

East of England Plan (May 2008)

SS1 Achieving Sustainable Development
ENV6 The Historic Environment
ENV7 Quality in the Built Environment

South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review Policies

BE8 Design and Environmental Considerations

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Design Guide - Design Supplement 4: The Historic Environment.

Planning History

CB/10/04367/CA - Current application for part demolition of rear single-storey structures to provide amenity space.
CB/10/00842/FULL - Withdrawn - Conversion of former Methodist chapel into four separate dwellings with part demolition of single storey rear projection and erection of two side porches and conversion of roof space.

Representations:

(Parish & Neighbours)

Parish/Town Council
(response to original
plan)

Has reservations regarding the number of bedrooms which should be reduced and removal of the front wall to permit parking. Heath and Reach Parish Council is not willing to consider any modification of the existing parking area. The plaques should be restored and conserved. There are little details of the garage doors. If approved conditions should be added to restrict storage or off

loading on the Green and access for all existing residential properties should continue.

Neighbours

2 Lanes End
(response to original plan)

Level of occupancy (5-bedrooms) unsustainable with the level of parking provision made. Green is already congested. Further work needed to accommodate more than one vehicle. Third floor could be removed. Stability of the integral garage needs to be questioned and some form of diagram showing feasibility required otherwise space will become redundant with another vehicle parked on the Green. Looking at the space between the building and cars parked on the Green only small cars could manoeuvre. Further feasibility required. White line could be put on the tarmac to give guidance to parked cars on the Green. To conclude the application has a lot of redeeming features but has failed to address the issue of parking provision. Concerns regarding the disruption the conversion process. There needs to be a condition that no building materials/skips left overnight on the road or within the parking area.

4 Heath Green

'I applaud the proposed ingenious adaptation of the Chapel thinking it the best solution in the circumstances. My only reservation is in regard to the existing upper floor windows of the chapel which are of frosted glass. I would ask for a similar type of glass to be fitted to future upper windows to prevent direct gaze into number 4 bed-room. Similarly if upper windows are to be fitted at the rear then I ask for these to be similarly glazed to preserve the privacy of my back garden'.

Consultations/Publicity responses

Conservation Officer	No objections subject to conditions.
Highway Officer	Objection - 3 parking spaces required.
Environmental Health Officer	No comments with regard to public protection issues.
Environment Agency	No objection.

Determining Issues

The main considerations of the application are:

1. Principle of the Development
2. Impact on the significance of the Heritage Asset
3. Impact on neighbouring properties
4. Parking

Considerations

1. Principle of the Development

The proposal site is within the settlement of Heath and Reach as defined in the Local Plan Proposal Maps. The conversion of the chapel to residential is therefore acceptable in principle subject to compliance with Local Plan Policy BE8, Planning Policy Guidance 13: Transport and Planning Policy Statement 5.

Policy HE7.4 of PPS5: Planning for the Historic Environment states:

Local planning authorities should take into account:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and of utilising their positive role in place-shaping; and
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets and the historic environment generally can make to the establishment and maintenance of sustainable communities and economic vitality...

Policy HE9.4 states that where a proposal has a harmful impact on the significance of a designated heritage asset which is less than substantial harm, in all cases local planning authorities should:

- (i) weigh the public benefit of the proposal (for example, that it helps to secure the optimum viable use of the heritage asset in the interests of its long-term conservation) against the harm; and
- (ii) recognise that the greater the harm to the significance of the heritage asset the greater the justification will be needed for any loss.

The chapel is not considered to be a Community Facility. The adjacent Town Barns are considered to serve this role

2. Impact on the significance of the Heritage Assets.

Since the building became redundant as a chapel, there has been difficulty in finding an appropriate alternative use. Planning permission was submitted for conversion to four dwellings which was withdrawn because of concerns raised by the Highway Officer as the required 8 parking spaces could not be accommodated on site or nearby.

The proposal before Committee is an amendment of that originally submitted. The design concept of the original plan included a garage door inserted through the front of the building (to house one vehicle) and the removal and repositioning of stone plaques. This proposal had a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the building and the Conservation area. In addition the Highway Officer objected due to manoeuvring and intervisibility concerns.

The Conservation Officer has stated:

'Although not a listed building, this chapel is very much a landmark building within the core of the designated Heath and Reach Conservation Area, and is recognised as such in the recent Heath and Reach Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2010). The building occupies a tightly configured site, but its elevated

position and outlook, and attractive appearance, have made it an interesting proposition for residential conversion since it became vacant a couple of years ago.

In acknowledgement of the landmark and architectural contribution the building makes to conservation area character, and the intrinsic interest of the interior of the building, I would wish to see any scheme of conversion based on the principle that key architectural elements will be retained, and that a scheme securing the long-term reuse of the building would involve a minimum of alterations. In this way, the Planning Authority can seek to preserve the key contribution the building makes to conservation area character in accordance with the presumption in favour of the conservation of designated heritage assets set out in PPS5 ('Planning for the Historic Environment') Policy HE9.

The scheme would see conversion of the building to a single family dwelling - a solution not involving alteration associated with unit subdivision. I am broadly happy that other alterations are not excessive or unreasonable in terms of the accommodation to be provided.

I am aware that, as finally presented, the scheme is the result of extended discussions between the Planning Authority and the project architect, which have sought to balance expectations regarding accommodation to be provided, and the LPA wish to control alteration that would harm the building's character. In its consideration of the submitted scheme, I am aware that the Planning Authority has been mindful of the apparent constraints of the site and the implications of these upon the viability of building conversion.

I have previously advised that a previous proposal, which would have seen the building incorporate a frontage garage facility is detrimental to the architectural character of the building to such an extent that I do not feel this alteration reasonable in terms of the public benefit to be gained through a reuse of the building. I am happy that this part of the proposal has been dropped, and am satisfied that the finalised submission strikes a reasonable balance between alteration and retention. I would ask, however, that the metal chimney flue is resisted internally, and the rather incongruous Barbecue fireplace omitted altogether. These are minor blemishes on a scheme which has been responsive to LPA concerns, and may be conditioned-out'.

Although there would be some detriment to the significance of the building because of the part demolition, this is outweighed by the public benefit of securing and bringing back into use an important 'Landmark Building' within the Conservation Area.

3. Impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties

The existing chapel has obscure-glazed windows at first-floor facing no's 2 Lanes End and no's 3& 4 Heath Green. The proposal would retain obscure glazed windows facing no.2 Heath Green but would see the replacement of windows facing no.3&4 Heath Green with opaque glass. This would have a detrimental impact on the properties' privacy and it is considered that this issue should be dealt with by way of condition.

Although there would be a new window at first floor level in the rear elevation and the insertion of a roof-light, these would not unduly affect the amenity of adjoining residential properties because of their location and adequate separation distances .

4.

Parking

Due to the constraints of the site parking provision is not available. There are existing parking spaces to the south of the Chapel but these form part of the Village Green and are used for the benefit of the Village.

Although the Highway Officer has objected to the proposal on the lack of parking provision, the proposed change of use to one dwelling is considered to acceptable because the current D1 use requires a higher amount of parking provision than the proposed single dwelling house. At present the building could be used for a D1 Use which would require a much higher parking provision than the proposed dwelling.

It would be preferable for the proposed dwelling to provide some on-plot parking. However, due to the constraints of the site and the larger shortfall in parking provision of the current use it is considered that an amended scheme showing no on-plot parking spaces would be acceptable.

The public benefit of securing and bringing back into use an important 'Landmark Building' within the Conservation Area is also a material consideration in justifying the provision of no parking provision.

Recommendation

That Planning Permission be Approved subject to no further consultation responses being received that are not covered in this report and to the signing of a S106 Legal Agreement in line with contributions required by the Central Bedfordshire Council Planning Obligations Strategy:

- 1 The development shall begin not later than three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2 **Before development/work begins and notwithstanding the details submitted with the application, details of the materials to be used for the external windows, doors, walls, roofs, pergola and rainwater goods of the proposed building/s shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development/work shall be carried out only in accordance with the approved details.**

Reason: To ensure that the development/work is in keeping with the existing building.

- 3 **Before development/work begins and notwithstanding the details submitted with the application, detailed drawings of the proposed new**

external windows and doors showing fenestration, sections, mouldings, the relationship with the external envelope of the building, and cill / head details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development/work shall be carried out only in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the development/work is in keeping with the existing building.

- 4 **Before development/work begins and notwithstanding the details submitted with the application, a schedule and specification of repair works detailing all proposed works of repair and making good to the fabric of the building shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development/work shall be carried out only in accordance with the approved details.**

Reason: To ensure that the proposed development/work is carried out in a manner which safeguards the historic character and structural integrity of the building.

- 5 Notwithstanding the permission hereby approved the approval does not include the flue or barbecue shown on Drawing No's 1509-P3A and 1509-P5B.

Reasons: To protect significance of the heritage assets.

- 6 The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the details shown on the submitted plans, numbers 1509-P5B, 1509-P4, 1509-P3A and 1509-P1.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt.

Reasons for Granting

The proposal is in conformity with Policy BE8 of the South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review 2004, as it preserves the significance of the Heritage Assets. It is also in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment and Adopted Technical Guidance, Design Supplement 4: The Historic Environment.

Notes to Applicant

1. In accordance with Article 31 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010, the Council hereby certify that the proposal as hereby approved conforms with the relevant policies of the Development Plan comprising of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England (the East of England Plan and the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy), Bedfordshire Structure Plan 2011 and the South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review and material considerations do not indicate otherwise. The policies which refer are as follows:

Regional Spatial Strategy
East of England Plan (May 2008)
SS1 Achieving Sustainable Development
ENV6 The Historic Environment
ENV7 Quality in the Built Environment

Bedfordshire Structure Plan 2011
None

South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review Policies
BE8 Design and Environmental Considerations

2. In accordance with Article 31 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010, the reason for any condition above relates to the Policies as referred to in the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), Bedfordshire Structure Plan 2011 (BSP) and the South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review (SBLPR).
3. This permission relates only to that required under the Town & Country Planning Acts and does not include any consent or approval under any other enactment or under the Building Regulations. Any other consent or approval which is necessary must be obtained from the appropriate authority.
4. Only clean, uncontaminated surface water should be discharged to any soakaway, watercourse or surface water sewer.

The proposal is situated over a principal aquifer.

Your council may wish to consider, in line with PPS23, whether the application site should be subject to a detailed scheme for the investigation and recording of contamination. A report would be submitted together with detailed proposals in line with current best practice for the removal, containment or otherwise rendering harmless of such contamination, as may be found. Environment Agency guidance is available via the following link: <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/planning/33706.aspx>

DECISION

.....
.....