

Item B. 1	07/01384/FUL	Permit (Subject to Legal Agreement)
Case Officer	Caron Taylor	
Ward	Brindle And Hoghton	
Proposal	Conversion of former Methodist Chapel building to residential property,	
Location	Hoghton Methodist Chapel Chapel Lane Hoghton Preston PR5 0RY	
Applicant	The Methodist Property Office	
Application No.	07/01384/FUL	
Proposal	This report relates to a planning application and listed building consent for the conversion of the former Hoghton Methodist Chapel to a residential property,	
Background	The building is a Grade II listed building dating from 1794, altered in the 19 th century on Chapel Lane, Hoghton. It should be noted there is also a planning application and listed building consent application to convert the Sunday School also in the churchyard, which is the subject of a separate report.	
Planning History	05/00813/FUL & 05/00967/LBC: Formation of access road and car park and erection of gravediggers store. REFUSED 03/00168/LBC: Application for Listed Building Consent to remove internal fittings consisting of pews and benching; balustrading in stairs to rear balcony; communion rail; pulpit and organ including pipes. REFUSED	
Policy	PPS1: General Policy and Principles PPS3: Housing PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment DC1: Development in the Green Belt DC7A: Conversion of Rural Buildings in the Green Belt DC10: Community Facilities in Rural Areas GN5: Building Design HT2: Alterations and Extensions to Listed Buildings	
Consultations	<u>Council's Conservation Officer</u> The principle of conversion needs to be considered. Whilst the loss of interior details within the Chapel, including the pulpit, the dais on which it sits and the pews, is lamentable the loss is not sufficient to remove the entire reason for the listed status. The loss is far outweighed by the safeguarding of the buildings future in a sustainable use. PPG15 advises that the most appropriate use for a building is the original use, however it also recognises that where this is not possible an appropriate and sympathetic conversion to an alternative use should be sought. It is considered that this proposal in this situation is acceptable in principle. However, a number of amendments are required before the applications would be considered acceptable: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The creation of raised seating areas and balustrade need to be 	

- removed and the floor made level throughout;
- The dais a simple wooden structure that should be capable of easy and non-damaging removal from the structure, will have lost its significance once the pulpit is removed and therefore does not warrant retention;
 - A storage building for refuse and recycling bins will be required as it would be unsightly and inappropriate to leave such items on open view;
 - A domestic curtilage boundary treatment is required particularly as the burial ground is to remain in active use;
 - The new entrance door design needs to be changed to a simple solid vertical boarded timber doors;
 - Recording of the building prior to conversion should be conditioned.

Planning Policy

Local Plan Review Policy DC7A gives preference to the re-use of rural buildings in the Green Belt for commercial uses and Policy DC10 aims to protect rural community facilities. The applicant has not submitted all of the marketing information that is strictly required by the SPG that support these policies when a residential re-use is proposed, but the supporting information provided indicates that the property has been marketed since early 2005 without any serious offers for non-residential use. The property is not well located in terms of the main Hoghton settlement and there is a danger of deteriorating, which is a concern as it is a Listed Building. Therefore, whilst this proposal does not strictly meet the SPG requirements, there is no policy objection in principle.

English Heritage

No objection to the principle of conversion to residential, but have some concerns over the treatment of the interiors, especially no attempt to retain any of the pews or pulpit. The internal fittings are of architectural interest and fundamental importance to the historic interpretation on the building. They also question if two turned timber columns and a Tuscan stone column are to be retained [they are] and treatment of floor surfaces. They recommend a more creative retention and re-use of the existing fittings.

Ancient Monuments Society

Welcome the retention of the organ pipes and bones of early gallery to east and front gallery to north, however, are balcony fronts to be kept, deplore loss of pulpit which came from Clayton Street Wesleyan Chapel in Blackburn and would like to see one example of each variety of seating left in the building. Question the use of the churchyard.

LCC Ecology

The presence of bats should be established before there is any favourable determination of the application.

Hoghton Parish Council

Are concerned that there is very limited parking in this area and the developments could cause problems.

LCC Highways

No objection

Coal Authority
Standing advice

The Georgian Society

Echo the comments of the Ancient Monuments Society. Are concerned about the scope of the internal alteration propose, particularly loss of the font, gallery fronts and box pews and should be retained if at all possible. There are concerns about the detailing of the scheme, and it is felt that the overall success of the proposals could be undermined by the installation of sub-standard joinery, finishes and so forth.

Representations

The planning grounds for objection received can be summarised as:

- Lack of amenity space;
- Contrary to PPS7 and PPS3;
- Loss of a community facility;
- Contrary to DC7A – greater impact on Green Belt than current use;
- Will still be need for grave diggers store and WC in Green Belt;
- It has not been demonstrated that suitable business re-use cannot be secured and a claw back provision has hindered the process;
- Impact on graves and peace and quiet of cemetery, including children playing in graveyard;
- Urbanisation of Green Belt;
- Loss of burial space for future generations;
- Increase in traffic and parking on Chapel Lane causing congestion;
- Bats are believed to inhabit the building;
- Have alternatives uses been explored for the building?

Neighbours have been consulted on the amended plans adding an amenity area to the rear of the property. Any further comments received will be placed on the addendum.

Applicant's Case

The building has been marketed since early 2005 and has had innumerable initial expressions of interest in the building, but virtually without exception the interest has been from individuals and developers interested in residential conversion. No serious offers to purchase have been received despite the fact that it has been indicated any reasonable offer would be considered. 153 sets of sales particulars and over 25 accompanied viewings have taken place and they are drawn to the conclusion that the only sustainable and viable re-use of the building is as a conversion for residential purposes. There was an offer to purchase the Sunday School in isolation from an adjoining property owner but with the interest of converting it for a dependent relative. Whilst the Chapel and Sunday School are redundant from the point of view of worship/religious educational use, the graveyard is still in use and will continue to be used for burials and internments for several decades to come.

Assessment

Principle of Conversion

There is a requirement in the Local Plan and associated SPG to market community buildings in rural areas for a period of nine months before conversion to other uses is considered. Although it is accepted that the marketing may not have been applied to the letter as laid out in the SPG, the building has been on the market for a much longer period than would normally be required, with no

realistic offers to retain a community use of the building being made according to the applicant. In addition, the fact that the building is listed must be given considerable weight, in line with PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment, if buildings can no longer be used for their original purpose then an alternative use should be sought. Therefore the conversion is considered acceptable in principle.

Green Belt

The proposals do not involve any extension to the building. In terms of Green Belt, the provision of amenity space for a dwelling is an inappropriate use in strict policy terms. Originally, the applications did not propose amenity space for the dwelling conversion, but Officers considered this necessary, especially in terms of bin storage. Therefore, a small amenity area for the dwelling contained entirely within the existing graveyard is considered justified in achieving a suitable re-use for the listed building. It is also considered necessary for the proposed amenity area to be delineated from the rest of the graveyard with a suitable railing, as the graveyard will remain in use. In addition to this, amended plans have been sought requesting a small structure for bins to be included in the proposal to avoid them being on open view. In 2005 applications were refused for a rear access road, car park, gravediggers store and WC. If the building is permitted to be converted to residential use then the LPA would not want a further building erecting in the graveyard for this purpose, and have made it clear to the applicant if one will be required, it should be designed into the current conversion. The applicant has not added it to the application and stated that this will not be needed in future. It has been made clear that if an application were to be submitted for this in the future, it would not be supported.

Design

The external appearance of the Chapel will remain largely unchanged, apart from that discussed above. Internally many more works will be required. Amended plans have been received to address the concerns of the Conservation Officer and some of the concerns of the Amenity bodies but overall the loss of some interior details, although regrettable, on the advice of the Conservation Officer has to be weighed against safeguarding of the building in the long-term.

Neighbour Amenity

The only window in the existing building facing towards the nearest property Chapel House will serve an en-suite. All other windows will face towards the Sunday School building, which is set further back on the site, and the gable end on no. 101 Chapel Lane, which is over 21m away, or towards Chapel Lane. Therefore the proposal will not have an unacceptable impact on neighbour amenity.

Highways

There has been no objection from LCC Highways, and although residents state that congestion will be caused to Chapel Lane by parking on the road, this must be considered in the context of the existing lawful use of the building (and indeed any reuse of the building) and the amount of traffic and parking that could be created if the use was to resume. Therefore it is considered that refusal of the applications could not be a justified on these grounds.

Ecology

A survey to establish whether bats are present on the site has been requested from the applicant, as the Council cannot make a favourable determination of the application without it. This will be detailed on the addendum.

Conclusion

Although there have been a number of objections to the applications, when the arguments for and against the proposals are considered, securing the long-term re-use of the listed building is considered to carry significant weight sufficient to recommend the applications for approval. This is subject to a s106 agreement for a commuted sum towards playspace, and a bat survey being received. Conditions are also proposed in terms of detailing e.g. doors, being approved by Officers and recording of the building prior to conversion.

Recommendation: Permit (Subject to Legal Agreement) Conditions

1. The proposed development must be begun not later than three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. Notwithstanding the details already submitted, this consent relates to the use of 'flush' fitting roof lights, only in accordance with details to be first submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include the model/make, exact dimensions and the fixing detail (including a cross section) of the roof light(s) to be used.

Reason: To protect the character and appearance of the building and in accordance with Policy No. HT2 of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review.

3. Before occupation of the dwelling hereby permitted, the amenity area as shown on the approved location plan shall have been created and delineated from the rest of the graveyard and thereafter remain freely available for use by the occupants of the Chapel as converted.

Reason: To provide the occupiers with reasonable amenity space for the storage of bins.

4. Before occupation of the dwelling hereby permitted, the bin store, as detailed on the approved plans, shall have been constructed and thereafter remain freely available for bin storage.

Reason: To protect the setting of the listed building and in accordance with policy HT3 of the adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan.

5. The window in the first floor of the building's west elevation serving the en-suite bathroom to bedroom 2, as shown on drawing no. P.458.A/02, shall be fitted with obscure glass and obscure glazing shall be retained at all times thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of the privacy of occupiers of neighbouring property and in accordance with Policy No. GN5 of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review.

6. Before the development commences, full details of the treatment of all the proposed windows and doors shall have been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The submitted details shall include the proposed method of construction, the materials to be used, fixing details (including cross sections) and their external finish including any surrounds, cills or lintels.

Reason: In the interests of the character and appearance of the building and in accordance with Policy No. HT2 of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review.

7. Unless otherwise agree in writing, no works shall take place until the applicant, or their agent or successors in title, have secured the implementation of a programme of building recording and analysis, which should a photographic record of any internal features that are to be removed in the course of the conversion. The building recording should be

completed to the standard as defined by the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (RCHME) at level 4. This must be carried out by a professionally qualified archaeological/building recording consultant or organisation in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which shall first have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Upon completion of the programme of building recording and analysis it shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure and safeguard the recording and inspection of matters of archaeological/historic importance associated with the building and in accordance with Policy No. HT6 of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review.

8. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 or any Order amending or revoking and re-enacting that Order, no alteration, extension, outbuilding or other works permitted by Schedule 2, Part 1, Class A, B, C, D, E, F, G and H shall be constructed or erected without express planning permission first being obtained (other than those expressly authorised by this permission).

Reason: To protect the appearance of the building and locality and in accordance with Policy No. DC1, DC7A and HT3 of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review.

9. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (Schedule 2, Part 2, Class A) (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order) no fences, gates or walls shall be erected within the curtilage of the dwelling hereby permitted (other than those expressly authorised by this permission) without express planning permission first being obtained.

Reason: To protect the appearance of the building and locality and in accordance with Policy No. HT3 of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review.
