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| <b>Item B. 4</b>        | <b>07/01387/LBC</b>   | <b>Grant Listed Building Consent</b> |
| <b>Case Officer</b>     | <b>Caron Taylor</b>   |                                      |
| <b>Ward</b>             | <b>Brindle And Hoghton</b>  |                                      |
| <b>Proposal</b>         | <b>Listed Building Consent for the conversion of former Sunday School building to residential property,</b>   |                                      |
| <b>Location</b>         | <b>Sunday School Hoghton Methodist Chapel Chapel Lane HoghtonPreston</b>  |                                      |
| <b>Applicant</b>        | <b>The Methodist Property Office</b>  |                                      |
| <b>Application No.</b>  | <b>07/01387/LBC</b>   |                                      |
| <b>Proposal</b>         | This report relates to a planning application and listed building consent for the conversion of the former Sunday School next Hoghton Methodist Chapel to a residential property.   |                                      |
| <b>Background</b>       | The Sunday School itself is not listed in its own right, but is within the curtilage of Hoghton Methodist Chapel, a Grade II listed building. It should be noted there is also a planning application and listed building consent application to convert the Methodist Chapel itself into a residential dwelling, which is the subject of a separate report.  |                                      |
| <b>Planning History</b> | 05/00813/FUL & 05/00967/LBC: Formation of access road and car park and erection of gravediggers store. REFUSED<br><br>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  |                                      |
| <b>Policy</b>           | PPS1: General Policy and Principles<br>PPS3: Housing<br>PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment<br>DC1: Development in the Green Belt<br>DC7A: Conversion of Rural Buildings in the Green Belt<br>DC10: Community Facilities in Rural Areas<br>GN5: Building Design<br>HT2: Alterations and Extensions to Listed Buildings   |                                      |
| <b>Consultations</b>    | <u>Council's Conservation Officer</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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;</li> <li>• A domestic curtilage boundary treatment is required particularly as the burial ground is to remain in active use;</li> <li>• The new entrance door design needs to be changed to a simple solid vertical boarded timber doors;</li> <li>• The altering of the size of one window opening in the Sunday School building is inappropriate. The original dimensions must be maintained in order to retain the buildings original identity;</li> </ul> |                                      |

- 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 it 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 interior. Any conversion of the schoolhouse should be approached in a sympathetic manner.

#### 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. The amount of subdivision that is proposed is of concern, which is regrettably visible externally by the floor cutting across the large Sunday School window. Often a less rigid approach to conversion may be a better approach. 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 alternative uses been explored for the building?
- Noise and disturbance;
- Introduction of a first floor will result in overlooking via rooflights to the cottages and patio area and they inappropriate to the design of the building;
- Rooflights unacceptable on a prominent roof slope;
- Loss of Sunday School balcony;
- If a sewerage treatment plan proposed above ground, this will cause visual intrusion.

### **Applicant's Case**

The building has been marketed (along with the Chapel) 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

The proposals do not involve any extension to the building. 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. In addition, the fact that the building is listed must be given considerable weight, in line with PPG15 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

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 it will remain in use, and amended plans have been sought requesting this and a small brick structure for bins. 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 Sunday School will remain largely unchanged, apart from that discussed above and the addition of rooflights to part of the building. The large window on the west elevation will be altered to allow for the introduction of a first floor, but is considered acceptable. Internally the building is full two-storey height with an existing balcony at the southern end. The proposal includes the introduction of a first floor and partitioning of the internal space. The proposals are considered acceptable subject to amended plans retaining the window in the northern elevation at its current size, a big store being provided and the rear amenity area being delineated from the wider graveyard. The Conservation Officer accepts the loss of the internal balcony and addition of conservation (flush fitting) rooflights.

### Neighbour Amenity

The neighbouring properties have objected on the grounds of overlooking. The building forms the boundary with no. 101 Chapel Lane and has two existing windows in its east elevation, which look directly onto their rear garden. These are currently high-level windows as there is no first floor in this part of the building. The introduction of a first floor will mean that these windows will serve a landing and en-suite. However, a condition requiring them to be both obscure glazed and non-opening in perpetuity is considered sufficient to protect the amenities of the neighbouring properties. Objection has also been received in relation to overlooking from new rooflights proposed in the east roof slope. However, these will be 1.8m above floor level a height considered sufficient to protect amenity. However, a condition requiring these to be fixed will be applied to prevent noise and disturbance to neighbouring properties.

### 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 the amount of traffic and parking that could be created by them if the use was to resume (or another use). 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. The application of conditions is considered sufficient to prevent loss of amenity to neighbouring properties. 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 to be approved by Officers and recording of the building prior to Conversion.

**Recommendation: Grant Listed Building Consent 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 the 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 Sunday School 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 Review.*

5. All windows in the first floor of the building's east elevation serving the hall/landing and en-suite bathroom as shown on drawing no. P.458.A/11 shall be fitted with non-opening windows with obscure glass, and non-opening 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 Nos. GN5 of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review.*

6. The rooflights in the rear (east) roof slope of the Sunday School as shown on drawing no. P.458.A/11 shall be fixed non-opening rooflights and shall be retained as such at all times thereafter.

*Reason: In the interests of the privacy of occupiers of neighbouring property and in accordance with Policy Nos. GN5 of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review.*

7. 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.*

8. Unless otherwise agreed 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. 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.*

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