

**11. FULL APPLICATION - INSTALLATION OF W.C FACILITY IN OLD BOILER ROOM, INSTALLATION OF KITCHENETTE IN SCHOOL ROOM AND NEW DOMESTIC PACKAGE TREATMENT PLANT TO BE LOCATED IN ADJACENT CAR PARK TOGETHER WITH ASSOCIATED PIPEWORK. REINSTATEMENT OF WINDOW. SCHOOL ROOM, MOOR ROAD, REAPSMOOR, LONGNOR (NP/SM/0318/0164 408381 / 362123 P5943 MN 5/3/18)**

**APPLICANT: MRS TAMMY SHIRLEY ON BEHALF OF PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

**1. Site and Surroundings**

- 1.1. The School Room is a Grade II\* listed building located in Reapsmoor, approximately 3.5km south of Longnor village. The first floor of the building is occupied by St Johns Church with the School Room on the ground floor. The School Room is used by the Church, Parish Council and other for community use. Ivy Cottage (the original school house) is also attached to the property but does not form part of the current application and is in separate residential occupation.
- 1.2. The two storey building was built in 1842. It has a blue clay tiled roof with verge parapets, the walls are constructed from coursed limestone. There is a flat roofed single storey porch to the front elevation and stone steps which lead up to the first floor entrance to the church.
- 1.3. The site car park is located immediately south of the building, accessed from the highway that runs north to south past the eastern edge of the site.
- 1.4. The site is outside of any designated conservation area.

**2. Proposal**

- 2.1. The proposed development is to facilitate the installation of a W.C facility in the property's old boiler room and a kitchenette in school room. The works involved that require planning permission are the installation of a new package treatment plant, including associated excavation, the reinstatement of a ground floor window, and minor alteration to the car park layout.

**3. RECOMMENDATION**

**That the application be APPROVED subject to the following conditions:**

- 1. 3 year time limit**
- 2. In accordance with the submitted plan and schedule of works**
- 3. Notwithstanding the submitted plans a package treatment plant as specified in the supporting documents shall be installed to deal with waste water from the site in place of the septic tank shown.**
- 4. Detailed design of new window to be agreed**
- 5. Position and design of soil vent pipe to be agreed**
- 6. Scheme of external lighting to be agreed**

**4. Key Issues**

- The impact of the development on the character, appearance, and setting of the listed building and wider landscape.

## **5. Relevant Planning History**

- 5.1. 2013 – Listed building consent granted for replacement windows.

## **6. Consultations**

- 6.1. Staffordshire Moorlands District Council – No response at time of writing
- 6.2. Staffordshire County Surveyor – No response at time of writing
- 6.3. Fawfieldhead Parish Council – No response at time of writing
- 6.4. PDNPA – Archaeology – Advise that the primary interest and significance of the site is in the architectural and historic interest of the building itself and we have no information or evidence to suggest earlier uses or activity of the site that could be revealed archaeologically. As a result no conditions are recommended if the application was to be approved.
- 6.5. PDNPA – Conservation – Supports approval subject to conditions requiring agreement of window details, that the new WC door to match the existing door, that details of the soil vent pipe be agreed, that external lighting be agreed, and that any structural works to the building are agreed prior to undertaking them.

## **7. Representations**

- 7.1. None received at time of writing.

## **8. Policies**

- 8.1. National Park designation is the highest level of landscape designation in the UK. The Environment Act 1995 sets out two statutory purposes for national parks in England and Wales:
- Conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage
  - Promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of national parks by the public

When national parks carry out these purposes they also have the duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the national parks.

### National Planning Policy Framework

- 8.2. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27 March 2012 and replaced a significant proportion of central government planning policy with immediate effect. The Government's intention is that the document should be considered as a material consideration and carry particular weight where a development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date. In the National Park the development plan comprises the Authority's Core Strategy 2011 and saved policies in the Peak District National Park Local Plan 2001. Policies in the Development Plan provide a clear starting point consistent with the National Park's statutory purposes for the determination of this application. It is considered that in this case there is no significant conflict between prevailing policies in the Development Plan and more recent Government guidance in the NPPF.
- 8.3. Para 115 of the NPPF states that *'great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads.'*

- 8.4. Part 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework deals with conserving and enhancing the historic environment.
- 8.5. Amongst other things, paragraph 132 states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. It notes that the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. It also advises that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting and that as heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification.
- 8.6. Paragraph 134 states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

#### Development Plan policies

- 8.7. Policy GSP1 sets out the broad strategy for achieving the National Park's objectives having regard to the Sandford Principle, (that is, where there are conflicting desired outcomes in achieving national park purposes, greater priority must be given to the conservation of the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area, even at the cost of socio-economic benefits). GPS1 also sets out the need for sustainable development and to avoid major development unless it is essential, and the need to mitigate localised harm where essential major development is allowed.
- 8.8. Policy GSP3 sets out development management principles and states that all development must respect, conserve and enhance all valued characteristics of the site and buildings, paying particular attention to, amongst other elements, impact on the character and setting of buildings, scale of the development appropriate to the character and appearance of the National Park, design in accordance with the National Park Authority Design Guide and impact on living conditions of communities.
- 8.9. Policy L1 identifies that development must conserve and enhance valued landscape character and valued characteristics, and other than in exceptional circumstances, proposals in the Natural Zone will not be permitted.
- 8.10. Policy L3 requires that development must conserve and where appropriate enhance heritage assets.
- 8.11. Policy HC4 states that the provision or improvement of community facilities and services will be encouraged within settlements listed in core policy DS1, or on their edges if no suitable site is available within. It goes on to state that elsewhere, proposals to provide community facilities and services involving a change of use of traditional buildings or a replacement building which achieves enhancement, will be encouraged.
- 8.12. Local Plan policy LC4 states that where development is acceptable in principle it will be permitted provided it is of a high standard of design that respects and conserves the landscape, built environment and characteristics of the area.
- 8.13. Listed buildings are addressed by policy LC6, which states that any applications for development must clearly demonstrate how the building will be preserved and enhanced and why the development is desirable or necessary.
- 8.14. Policy LC21 states, amongst other things, that development that prevents a risk of pollution or disturbance that could adversely affect water supply, groundwater resources, or the water environment will not be permitted unless adequate measures to control emissions within acceptable limits are put in place.

Relevant Core Strategy (CS) policies: GSP1, GSP3, L1, L3

Relevant Local Plan (LP) policies: LC4, LC6

## 9. **Assessment**

### Principle

- 9.1. The development does not represent a change of use of the building, but would improve its versatility as a community facility. Planning policy does support the improvement of community facilities, particularly those in traditional buildings and the proposal is therefore welcomed in principle.

### Impact of the works on the appearance and setting of the listed building and wider landscape

- 9.2. The external works to the building itself are limited to re-opening a former window. This would result in an improvement to the appearance of the building and restore a historic feature. However, there is insufficient information of how the new window would be detailed. The application notes that the new window would be to match the window above, but sufficiently detailed plans of frame profiles and mouldings for neither have been provided. It is therefore recommended that if permission is granted details of the window design are reserved by condition.
- 9.3. The installation of the drainage equipment in the car park and associated ground works would have a very limited visual impact once completed; the only evidence of the development would be visible inspection chamber covers at ground level, and a new grass verge at the rear of the car park to act as a soakaway for the treatment plant. These would have a less than significant impact on the setting of the listed building or wider landscape.
- 9.4. The provision of any new external lighting has the potential to impact on the character and appearance of the building and the wider rural landscape too, and so it is recommended that details of this should be reserved by condition.
- 9.5. It is also recommended that the details and position of any soil vent pipe are reserved to ensure its design and position conserve the buildings appearance.

### Amenity

- 9.6. The development would not change the relationship of the property to the adjacent house, which is the only nearby neighbour. The use of the building would also remain the same, and it is not considered likely that the proposal would result in any significant changes to noise or disturbance to this neighbour.

### Highway Considerations

- 9.7. Once the installation of the drainage works are complete the disturbed area of the carpark will be reinstated, with only a minor reduction in parking area due to the provision of a soakaway at the back of the site. There would be no change to the site access arrangements.
- 9.8. On this basis the development would not result in any significant adverse highway impacts.

### Pollution

- 9.9. The application proposes the installation of a package treatment plant beneath the car park to serve the new WC and kitchen. An acceptable specification for this has been provided (the precise details of effluent discharge are covered by other legislation separate from the planning system). However, the submitted plans refer to this as a septic tank. This would not

be acceptable, as it would result in a higher level of groundwater pollution than a package treatment plant. National planning guidance is clear that these should only be considered where connection to mains sewerage or a package treatment plant are not feasible when taking into account cost and/or practicability. In this case, there is no evidence that such an exceptional case exists. It is therefore recommended that if permission is granted a condition is imposed to ensure installation of only a package treatment plant and not a septic tank.

#### Archaeology

- 9.10. Whilst the proposal includes some excavation, the Authority's Archaeologist has advised that there is no evidence of former uses on the site that would warrant the need for any archaeological investigation or recording.

### **10. Conclusion**

- 10.1. Overall the proposed development would have a neutral impact on the appearance of the building and landscape, and would improve its potential use as a community facility. As such the development would comply with planning policy.
- 10.2. There is otherwise no conflict between the intent of policies in the Development Plan and Government guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework and there are no other relevant considerations that would otherwise indicate planning permission should be refused.
- 10.3. Accordingly, the application is recommended for conditional approval.

### **11. Human Rights**

- 11.1. None

### **12. List of Background Papers (not previously published)**

None

#### **Report Author and Job Title**

Mark Nuttall, Senior Planner