

14. FULL APPLICATION – REPAIRS, INSTALLATION OF KITCHEN AND WC, AND FIRE SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS AT REAPSMOOR CHAPEL AND PARISH ROOM, REAPSMOOR (NP/SM/0319/0291, MN)

APPLICANT: PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Summary

1. The proposed development seeks to repair the building and add facilities to improve its function as a community facility, and to improve fire safety standards within the building.
2. Subject to conditions the development would conserve the heritage of the building and would not result in adverse planning impacts.
3. Accordingly, the application is recommended for approval.

Site and surroundings

4. Reapsmoor Chapel 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.
5. 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.
6. The building is two storey and 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.
7. The property's 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.
8. The site is outside of any designated conservation area.

Proposal

9. The proposal involves a number of minor works to the listed building, which are summarised as:
 - Undertaking general repairs to bring the condition of the building up to an acceptable, serviceable standard
 - Installation of a toilet and kitchen to facilitate use of the building as a community facility
 - Improvements to ensure the building complies with current fire safety legislation

RECOMMENDATION:

10. That the application be APPROVED subject to the following conditions:

1. 3 year implementation period.
2. Full details drawn to scale of the new door to the WC to be submitted for approval

3. There shall be no underpinning or structural works associated with the proposed new usage of the Bell Tower as a WC, without prior approval.
4. Full details of the external staircase handrail and of the emergency lights to be fitted to their underside, including the exact size and position of cabling entering the building shall be submitted for approval
5. Paint finish to the 2no. bulkhead lights to be approved in writing with the Authority
6. Sample to be approved for re-pointing work

Key Issues

11. The impact of the development on the character and appearance of the listed building.

History

2018 – Planning permission and listed building consent granted for installation of w.c, installation of kitchenette, new package treatment plant in car park together with associated pipework, and reinstatement of a window

2013 – Listed building consent granted for replacement windows.

Consultations

12. Highway Authority – No response at time of writing.
13. Parish Council – Strongly support the application, considering the work to be essential for the local community and the preservation of the building.
14. Authority's Conservation Officer – No objections to the proposal as amended, subject to conditions addressing the following:
 - Full details, drawn to scale, of the new door to the WC
 - There shall be no underpinning or structural works associated with the proposed new usage of the Bell Tower as a WC, without the prior agreement Full details of the external staircase handrail and of the emergency lights to be fitted to their underside, including the exact size and position of cabling entering the building
 - Paint finish to the 2no. bulkhead lights to be agreed in writing
 - Sample to be agreed for re-pointing work
15. Authority's Archaeologist – No objections.

Representations

16. No representations were received during the public consultation period.

Main policies

17. Relevant Core Strategy policies: GSP1, GSP2, GSP3, DS1, and L3.
18. Relevant Development Management Plan policies: DMC3, DMC8, DMC13, DME1

National planning policy framework

19. 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 which are to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage and 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.
20. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has been revised (2019). This replaces the previous document (2012) 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 particular Paragraph 172 states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.
21. As the development relates to a listed building, section 16 of the NPPF is particularly relevant. Paragraph 193 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 (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.
22. In the National Park the development plan comprises the Authority's Core Strategy 2011 and the Adopted Development Management Policies. 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 government guidance in the NPPF with regard to the issues that are raised.

Development plan

23. Core Strategy policies GSP1, GSP2 and GSP3 together say that all development in the National Park must be consistent with the National Park's legal purposes and duty and that the Sandford Principle will be applied where there is conflict. Opportunities for enhancing the valued characteristics of the National Park will be identified and acted upon and development which would enhance the valued characteristics of the National Park will be permitted. Particular attention will be paid to impact on the character and setting of buildings, siting, landscaping and building materials, design in accordance with the Design Guide and the impact upon living conditions of local communities. CS policy GSP4 highlights that the National Park Authority will consider using planning conditions or obligations to secure the achievement of its spatial outcomes.
24. Core Strategy policy L2 states that development must conserve and enhance any sites,
25. Core Strategy policy L3 requires that development must conserve and where appropriate enhance or reveal significance of archaeological, artistic or historic asset and their setting, including statutory designation and other heritage assets of international, national, regional or local importance or special interest.

26. Development Management Policy DMC3 requires development to be of a high standard that respects, protects, and where possible enhances the natural beauty, quality and visual amenity of the landscape, including the wildlife and cultural heritage that contribute to the distinctive sense of place. It also provides further detailed criteria to assess design and landscaping, as well as requiring development to conserve the amenity of other properties.
27. Development Management Policy DMC5 provides detailed advice relating to proposals affecting heritage assets and their settings, requiring new development to demonstrate how valued features will be conserved, as well as detailing the types and levels of information required to support such proposals. It also requires development to avoid harm to the significance, character, and appearance of heritage assets and details the exceptional circumstances in which development resulting in such harm may be supported.
28. Development Management Policy DMC7 addresses development affecting listed building, advising that applications for such development should be determined in accordance with policy DMC5 and address how their significance will be preserved. It goes on to detail specific aspects of development that will not be supported when dealing with applications affecting listed buildings.

Assessment

Principle

29. 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.

Impacts on the character, appearance, and significance of the listed building

General repairs

30. These include repairs to masonry, parts of the roof, windows, floors and internal walls. The building is in need of this attention in order to prevent further decline. Many of the works represent like-for-like repair not requiring listed building consent or planning permission, but the application includes a detailed specification for how all of the repair works would be undertaken to ensure that they do not result in harm to the character or significance of the building, as required by policies L3, DMC3, DMC5, and DMC7 and the guidance contained within section 16 of the NPPF
31. Conditions securing the detailed method and appearance of these works are recommended in accordance with the recommendations of the Authority's conservation officer to ensure that the works are sympathetic to the buildings significance.

New toilet and kitchenette

32. Both of these aspects of the proposed works also formed part of the 2018 permissions that were granted for works to this building, albeit some differences and additions to what was previously approved are now proposed. The works re-use existing openings and rooms, having a low impact on historic fabric.
33. The previous approval did not specify that a new water supply was required to be supplied into the building. The application now details this, and it would be brought through the site below ground, coming in to the building below the existing stone door

threshold, minimising impact on historic fabric.

34. An extractor fan was originally proposed to serve the new kitchenette as part of the current application, but this has been omitted on the advice of the Authority's conservation officer.
35. Some changes have also been made in relation to foul drainage discharge, which was previously approved to run to a new package treatment plant. It has since been established that it is possible to instead run the foul drainage to an existing septic tank that currently serves Ivy Cottage. This would reduce ground disturbance compared to the approved scheme, and no objection has been raised by either the Authority's conservation officer or archaeologist.
36. Overall, these works would have a very low impact on the building, conserving its significance, complying with policies L3, DMC3, DMC5, and DMC7 and the guidance contained within section 16 of the NPPF

Install fire alarm and emergency lighting

37. It is proposed to upgrade the electrical installation to meet current standards, and to install a fire alarm and emergency lighting to ensure the building complies with current legislation on fire safety.
38. The existing bulkhead light fitted above the entrance door is prominent and out of keeping. The Authority's conservation officer has advised the applicant of appropriate replacement light fittings that would conserve the buildings appearance, and these now form part of the amended proposal, including recessed lighting beneath the handrail to the front stairs and more discrete lighting at the front porch and WC doors. A condition to secure the precise design and appearance of this lighting is recommended.
39. The other electrical works proposed would not harm the buildings significance, complying with policies L3, DMC3, DMC5, and DMC7 and section 16 of the NPPF

Ecological impacts

40. The application has been accompanied by a bat survey, although this was not an emergence survey due to being carried out during the bat hibernation period. The survey did find evidence of bat roosts within the building's roof and advises that the building continues to offer roosting potential. The report concludes that the extent of the proposed works is sufficiently limited that it would not adversely impact on bat interests.
41. On this basis the proposal would conserve the ecological interests of the site as required by policies LC2.

Amenity impacts

42. The proposed development would not result in any loss of privacy, any additional disturbance, or otherwise affect the amenity of any other residential property, complying with policy DMC3.

Highway impacts

43. The development would not alter the site access and would maintain the existing car park.
44. Therefore it would conserve highway safety and amenity.

Conclusion

- 45. We conclude that as amended the proposal will conserve significance, character and appearance of the listed building in accordance with policies GSP3, L3, DMC3, DMC5, and DMC7.
- 46. There are no other policy or material considerations that would indicate that planning permission should be refused.
- 47. We therefore recommend the application for conditional approval.

Human Rights

- 48. Any human rights issues have been considered and addressed in the preparation of this report.

List of Background Papers (not previously published)

- 49. Nil

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