

12. FULL APPLICATION – CONVERSION OF A DISUSED CHURCH INTO TWO RESIDENTIAL UNITS, INCLUDING DEMOLITION OF A SUBSTANTIAL PORTION OF THE MODERN REAR EXTENSION TO CREATE ADDITIONAL EXTERNAL SPACE, KETTLESHULME METHODIST CHURCH, PADDOCK LANE, KETTLESHULME (NP/CEC/0821/0935 /JRS)

APPLICANTS: MR PHILIP GOOD

Summary

1. The proposal is for the conversion of a former church to two dwellings (reduced from three). The building is now redundant and in need of a beneficial use. The revised scheme would conserve the character of the building and its setting in the Kettleshulme Conservation Area and any harm to the building as a non-designated heritage asset would be outweighed by the public benefits of providing a beneficial use for the redundant building.
2. The new dwellings would have no on-site car parking but there is existing roadside parking and any alternative use of the building would require such parking, as did the original use.
3. There would be no adverse impacts on residential amenity and all other considerations, including ecology, can be dealt with by means of appropriately worded conditions.

Site and Surroundings

4. The site is located on the northern side of Paddock Lane in the village of Kettleshulme, in a part of the village known as Brookbottom. Paddock Lane runs north from B.5470, Macclesfield Road, and loops around to meet Kishfield Lane to the north-east. The lane runs to the north of the recreation ground, which occupies the central part of the village. Paddock Lane has a mixture of traditional buildings, mainly around the church, and more recent, post-war houses to the west and south.
5. The site is a disused Methodist church which was originally constructed as a chapel in 1815 but rebuilt in the gothic style around 1901 (there is a date stone on the front elevation). The lower parts of the walls survive from the first chapel. There is a more recent flat-roofed extension on the rear of the building containing a kitchen and WC. The church is attached to a cottage to the north, which is part of a short terrace of traditional gritstone buildings. To the south there is a narrow passageway to the rear, with this passageway separating the church from the cottage to the south.
6. The roof is clad with natural blue slate and has a clay tile ridge, the property is of a timber frame construction with natural stone walls. There is a timber door to the front with three timber frame single pane windows to the front elevation. The existing rainwater goods are cast aluminium.
7. The site lies within Kettleshulme Conservation Area. The building is not statutorily listed but it is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset given its age and character.
8. There is no parking on the site, but there is roadside parking on the opposite side of the road, to the south. This appears to serve properties along Paddock Lane and the recreation ground.

Proposal

9. Planning permission is being sought for the conversion of a disused church into two residential units, including the demolition of a substantial portion of the modern rear

extension to create additional external space. The remaining extension would be given a pitched slate roof to accommodate a “bat lodge” in the loft space created.

10. The initial application was for conversion to three dwellings, but this was reduced to two following discussions with officers.
11. Internally the space would be divided by new floors to create three floor levels for each of the two new dwellings.
12. The only significant external change is to the rear of the building where it is proposed that the single storey extension, a later addition to the building, is reduced in size to provide ground level amenity space and improved access to the rear of the building. The external wall of the extension will be partially retained to maintain privacy to the gated access of the adjacent property. As noted above, a pitched roof would be added to the rear projection to provide a bat lodge.
13. Two new openings are proposed to the rear of the building at ground floor level. These would be full height openings, designed to reflect the size and proportion of existing openings and are aligned to the windows above. Dressed stone surrounds are proposed to provide a finish consistent with the existing building.
14. The roof of the church is currently covered with natural blue slate with ornate terracotta ridge tiles; this would be retained. New aluminium framed ‘conservation’ rooflights are proposed for the roof slopes (four on one side and six on the other), coloured black, within a recess formed in traditionally detailed standing seam lead flashing. The existing windows would be replaced with aluminium framed, triple glazed, windows, with a powder coated finish, colour dark grey.
15. The site has no on-site parking so vehicles associated with the development would have to park on the existing roadside parking area on Paddock Lane.
16. There is a small yard at the rear of the building where bins are stored.
17. The application is supported by a Design and Access Statement, a Heritage Statement, a Development Appraisal, setting out the financial viability case for the development, a Climate Change Mitigation statement, and an ecological assessment relating to bats. These have been revised to reflect the amended scheme.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the application be APPROVED subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Adopt amended plans subject to detailed design conditions, including submission of window details prior to commencement.**
- 2. Submit details of obscure glazing of rear windows.**
- 3. Submit and agree details of rooflights.**
- 4. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order 2015 (or any order revoking or re-enacting that Order) no alterations to the external appearance of the dwellings shall be carried out and no extensions, porches, ancillary buildings, solar/photo voltaic panels, gates, fences, walls or other means of boundary enclosure shall be erected on the site without the National Park Authority's prior written consent.**

5. Ecology conditions.
6. Minor architectural details e.g. repointing, rainwater goods to be cast iron, no external sump's, agree vent types/locations.
7. Extension to be roofed in Welsh blue slates
8. Sample stonework for extension to match existing walling.
9. Submit for written agreement precise measures to be included in the climate change mitigation and adaptation statement with implementation confirmation thereafter.
10. No external lighting other than in accordance with scheme to be submitted and agreed in writing.
11. Historic Building Recording to HE level 2 before work commences.

Key Issues

The main issues in this case are considered to be:

- Whether the proposed conversion of the buildings to the proposed uses is acceptable in principle in this location.
- Whether the loss of the building as a community facility is acceptable
- The impact of the conversion on the character and appearance of the building and its setting.
- The potential impact on the privacy and amenity of neighbouring properties.
- Highway impacts

History

18. NP/M/195/004, granted in April 1995, for the demolition and reconstruction of sanitary accommodation at the rear of the building.

Consultations (in response to revised proposal for two dwellings)

19. Highway Authority:

"To accord with CEC car parking standards two off-street car parking spaces per dwelling, within the curtilage of the site, are required. However, none are proposed as there is insufficient space within the boundary of the church.

Reference is made to a small area of public car parking located nearby which could be used by future residents; however, the highway authority does not normally support this, which is why the car parking standards exist. Having said that:

1. *It is unclear who owns this land and whether or not it is a public car park;*
2. *It is unclear whether or not the parking area is oversubscribed overnight; and*
3. *I note that a number of nearby property owners have converted their front gardens into driveways and that there are a number of nearby dwellings with no off-street car parking provision.*

Point three indicates that there is likely to be a problem with on-street car parking congestion and that this proposal could make this situation worst for existing residents.

The above points need to be addressed, for me to be able to support the planning application".

In response to this, officers have advised the Highway Officer that there is roadside parking nearby and the building has a lawful use which could generate traffic and parking and will have done so in the past, so he has been asked to comment on this by the date of the Committee meeting.

20. Cheshire East Rights of Way: The property is adjacent to public footpath Kettleshulme No. 26 as recorded on the Definitive Map. It appears unlikely that the proposal would affect the public right of way, although the PROW Unit would expect the planning department to add an advice note to any planning consent to ensure that developers are aware of their obligations.
21. Kettleshulme Parish Council: *“The Parish Council believe that the issues raised from the initial application have not been addressed within the new application. There remains no on site parking for the building and even with the amendment from 3 dwellings to 2 3-bed dwellings, this would still create a possibility of 4 + additional vehicles with a need to park on an already busy and in places narrow Paddock Lane. There also remains a probability of loss of privacy for residents of Brookbottom Cottages, which the Methodist Church overlooks. The current state of the road surface on Paddock Lane is also a matter of concern and an increase in vehicular traffic would further deteriorate the condition of the road”*
 - a. Conservation Officer PDNPA: Comments on revised scheme as follows:
 - a. *“Internal subdivision
The revised drawings are a significant improvement on the original proposal. The proposals will inevitably lead to a loss of significance associated with the open space, but the scheme is now much less intensive and the use of floor to ceiling voids will preserve the sense of openness from the ground floor and keep the windows clear of inserted floors.*
 - b. *Rooflights
The proposed rooflights are an improvement on the original scheme, although they will still have a negative visual impact on the conservation area and the building. Another unfortunate side effect would be the loss of the original roof vents, some of which contain attractive gothic trefoil heads.*
 - c. *Windows
The scheme proposes the replacement of all the windows with triple glazed aluminium frames. The initial conservation officer comments queried the history and significance of the windows, and it is unfortunate that this has not been covered by the heritage statement.*
 - d. *The windows appear to have slim timber glazing bars and match the pattern of the windows in the historic photo shown in the heritage statement. On balance, the windows are probably original or good copies of the originals. They contribute to the significance of the building and the conservation area. They should be retained maintained. The windows can be upgraded with secondary glazing if necessary.*
 - e. *Two of the windows are shown with obscured glazing. This has the potential to impact on the character of the building and the conservation area. How is this to be carried out and why is it necessary?*
 - f. *The rear windows feature stained glass, which contributes to the communal and aesthetic value of the building, as well as its character as a place of worship. Their loss would negatively impact the significance of the building.*
 - g. *Rear extension
The replacement of the modern rear extension would be an enhancement, provided the extension is detailed to a high standard.*

h. Insulation

The climate change statement refers to insulation but there are no further details in the application. How is the building to be insulated? The method of insulation can have a major impact on historic buildings and the application should not be fully assessed without this information.

This should include details of existing and proposed roof walls and floor build-up, and an assessment of the impact this would have on the hygrothermal performance of the building.

i. Alteration to the roof trusses:

The proposals show significant alterations to the roof trusses, but it is not clear on whether all the trusses are affected, or the justification for the changes. Can the conversion be done without such fundamental changes?

j. Rainwater goods

The proposals include uPVC rainwater goods. This would not be appropriate for a historic building in a conservation area and should be of cast iron.

k. Wall lighting

This would be an inappropriate addition to a rural church building and should either be omitted from the scheme or redesigned to provide the minimum level of lighting necessary for the function of the building.

l. Overall the proposals are an improvement on the original application, however there are still outstanding issues and missing information that need addressing before the application can be supported ”.

(N.B. There have been further revisions to the scheme since these comments were made, responding to some of these concerns)

22. Ecologist PDNPA:

- No work should be carried out on the building without the applicant first obtaining a Bat Mitigation Class Licence from Natural England .
- All of the proposed mitigation measures for bats outlined in Kettlethulme Methodist Church Bat Survey by Dunelm Ecology should be carried out in full as part of a mitigation plan carried out under the Natural England Bat Licence.

Representations

23. Four representations have been received (three of which have also responded to the re-consultation) raising the following points:

- There would be an issue with parking, i.e. we struggle for spaces at present, with some residents having to park on the Lane now. Even that is limited due to the narrow width in places and some properties opposite the parking area making gateways and private parking for themselves. The potential for more vehicles could not be supported.
- We object to any plan which will possibly increase the amount of vehicles which will park on Paddock Lane, with so many residences this increase could be considerable. The present parking spaces are often overwhelmed at night time and vehicles double park on the narrow lane obstructing passage for emergency vehicles.
- We do not feel the parking issue has been addressed at all and the downgrading from 3 to 2 properties could still see a possible 4-6 cars. As stated in our initial letter, there simply is nowhere to park these vehicles.

- We do also have concerns about how the works are going to impact on our home, privacy and logistical details such a placement of skips, demolition of existing buildings, accessibility etc. Being victims to major flooding in 2019, how does the proprietor aim to mitigate any issues that may arise from this building when the draining system and culvert are already fragile? We feel that 2 properties is simply excessive and will greatly impact a small rural lane such as ours.
- Please can you consider maintaining the privacy of the back garden at Brooklands, specifically ensuring the view from the proposed upper back windows of the chapel does not look directly down onto the immediate first half of my garden where my terrace and utility room are.

Main Policies

24. Relevant Core Strategy policies: GSP1, GSP2, GSP3, GSP4, DS1, HC1, HC4, L1, L2, L3, CC1.
25. Relevant Development Management Plan policies: DMC3, DMC5, DMC8, DMC10, DMC12, DMS2, DMT3.

National Planning Policy Framework

26. 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 latest revised NPPF was published in December 2023. 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 Development Management Policies (adopted May 2019) 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.
27. Paragraph 182 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.
28. Paragraph 203 of the NPPF states that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Core Strategy

29. Core Strategy 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). GSP1 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.
30. Core Strategy policy GSP2 states, amongst other things, that when development is permitted, a design will be sought that respects the character of the area.
31. Core Strategy 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.
32. Policy DS1 *Development Strategy* sets out the principles to promote a sustainable distribution and level of growth and support the effective conservation and enhancement of the National Park. This includes the conversion or change of use for housing, community facilities and business uses including visitor accommodation, preferably by re-use of traditional buildings.
33. Policy HC1 says that provision will not be made for housing solely to meet open market demand. New housing can be accepted where it would meet eligible local need for affordable housing, provides for key rural workers or is required to achieve conservation and or enhancement of valued vernacular or listed buildings.
34. Policy HC4 *Provision and retention of community services and facilities* states: *“Proposals to change the use of buildings or sites which provide community services and facilities including shops and financial and professional services to non-community uses must demonstrate that the service or facility is: I. no longer needed; or II. available elsewhere in the settlement; or III. can no longer be viable. Wherever possible, the new use must either meet another community need or offer alternative community benefit such as social housing. Evidence of reasonable attempts to secure such a use must be provided before any other use is permitted.”*
35. Core Strategy policy L1 addresses landscape character and valued characteristics. Seeks to ensure that all development conserves and enhances valued landscape character and sites, features and species of biodiversity importance.
36. Core Strategy policy L3 requires that development must conserve and where appropriate enhance or reveal significance of archaeological, artistic or historic assets and their setting, including statutory designation and other heritage assets of international, national, regional or local importance or special interest.
37. Core Strategy policy CC1 states that development must make the most efficient and sustainable use of land, buildings and natural resources.

Development Management Policies

38. 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.
39. Policy DMC3. B sets out various aspects that particular attention will be paid to siting, scale, form, mass, levels, height and orientation, settlement form and character, landscape, details, materials and finishes landscaping, access, utilities and parking, amenity, accessibility and the principles embedded in the design related SPD and the technical guide.
40. 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.
41. Development Management Policy DMC8 sets out the policy on development in Conservation Areas. It states that applications should assess and clearly demonstrate how the character and appearance and significance of the Conservation Area will be preserved or enhanced and should be determined in accordance with Policy DMC5. Development will not be permitted if applicants fail to provide adequate or accurate detailed information to show the effect of their proposals on the character, appearance and significance of the component parts of the Conservation Area and its setting.
42. Policy DMC10 A. says that the conversion of a heritage asset will be permitted provided that:
 - i. it can accommodate the new use without changes that adversely affect its character (such changes include enlargement, subdivision or other alterations to form and mass, inappropriate new window openings or doorways and major rebuilding); and
 - ii. the building is capable of conversion, the extent of which would not compromise the significance and character of the building; and
 - iii. the changes brought about by the new use, and any associated infrastructure (such as access and services), conserves or enhances the heritage significance of the asset, its setting (in accordance with policy DMC5), any valued landscape character, and any valued built environment; and
 - iv. the new use of the building or any curtilage created would not be visually intrusive in its landscape or have an adverse impact on tranquillity, dark skies or other valued characteristics.
43. Policy DMC10 B. says proposals under Core Strategy policy HC1 C1 will only be permitted where:
 - i. the building is a designated heritage asset; or
 - ii. based on the evidence, the National Park Authority has identified the building as a non-designated heritage asset; and
 - iii. it can be demonstrated that conversion to a market dwelling is required in order to achieve the conservation and, where appropriate, the enhancement of the significance of the heritage asset and the contribution of its setting.

44. DMC11 *Safeguarding, recording and enhancing nature conservation interests* says that proposals should aim to achieve net gains to biodiversity or geodiversity as a result of development. In considering whether a proposal conserves and enhances sites, features or species of wildlife, geological or geomorphological importance all reasonable measures must be taken to avoid net loss.
45. Policy DMS2 *Change of use of shops, community services and facilities* states that where an applicant is seeking change of use from a shop or a community service/facility to a non-community use, evidence of reasonable attempts to sell or let the shop or community service/facility as a going concern must be provided including:
- (i) evidence of a thorough viability assessment and a marketing exercise with a commercial property agent, sustained over at least 12 months, to sell or let the building for alternative community uses or facilities including local needs affordable housing; and
 - (ii) evidence of marketing of the property through the Economic Development Team of the appropriate local authority for at least 12 months; and
 - (iii) details of contact made with the Town Council, Parish Council or Meeting and other adjacent Parishes to establish the needs existing in the local area and an assessment of the local affordable housing needs in the Parish or adjoining Parishes with reference to an up to date Housing Needs Survey.
46. Policy DMT3 states that development which includes a new or improved access will only be permitted where a safe access can be provided.

Design Guide

47. The Design Guide states that *'the guiding principle behind the design of any conversion should be that the character of the original building and its setting should be respected and retained'*.

Conversion of Historic Buildings Supplementary Planning Document (SPD):

48. This SPD was adopted in April 2022. It is intended to be used by those wishing to convert historic buildings. It provides a level of detail that is necessary to interpret national guidance in the context of Peak District National Park's protected landscape. In particular it clarifies DMP policy DMC10 'Conversion of a heritage asset' by focusing on:

- Principle 1: Understand the building and its setting
- Principle 2: Work with the existing form and character
- Principle 3: Follow a conservation approach
- Principle 4: Create responsive new design
- Principle 5: Use appropriate materials and detailing
- Principle 6: Conserve and enhance the setting

Principle of the Development

49. The proposal is for the conversion of the former church to create two open market dwellings. The site is located in a small group of traditional buildings on the northern side of Paddock Lane, north of the centre of Kettleshulme, which is a named settlement in Core Strategy policy DS1. The policies set out above, notably policies HC1 and DMC10, support the principle of the conversion of non-designated heritage assets such as this to alternative uses within policy DS1, provided that the development is required to secure the conservation or enhancement of the buildings and the impact of the conversion on the buildings and their setting is acceptable.
50. The church is not a listed building and is therefore not a designated heritage asset. However, given its age and historical and architectural significance, it is considered to be

a non-designated heritage asset. It is also within a Conservation Area. A Heritage Statement has been submitted with the application to assess the significance of the site and buildings as required by policy DMC5; the initial one was relatively short and lacking in some detail, but a more detailed one was submitted at the Officer's request.

51. Therefore, the key issue is the impact of the development and whether the conversion is required to achieve the conservation or enhancement of the building and the impact on the surrounding area, including the Conservation Area.
52. The Supporting Statement and the Heritage Statement assess the significance of the building and its setting. These assessments are detailed, acknowledging the architectural and historic interest of the building. Even though it is relatively simple building, it is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset. It is also important in the setting of this part of the Kettleshulme Conservation Area. Given that the church has been largely unused for several years, the principle of conversion of the building to a beneficial use is considered to be in accordance with Core Strategy policies DS1 and L3 and DM policies DMC5 and DMC10, provided the scheme does not result in harm to the character and appearance of the building and its setting. The Heritage Statement which accompanies the application concludes that the building has sufficient historic and vernacular merit to warrant conversion to an alternative use. Officers agree with this assessment, so the proposal is in accordance with the key policies on this issue. The principle of the change of use of the site to two dwellings is acceptable and accords with Policy HC1.

Loss of a Community Facility

53. Core Strategy policy HC4 and DM policy DS2 set out the Authority's policies on the retention of community facilities and the circumstances in which their change of use to another use may be permitted. The change the use of buildings which provide community services and facilities (such as churches) to non-community uses must demonstrate that the service or facility is:
 - I. no longer needed; or
 - II. available elsewhere in the settlement; or
 - III. can no longer be viable.

Wherever possible, the new use must either meet another community need or offer alternative community benefit such as social housing. Evidence of reasonable attempts to secure such a use must be provided before any other use is permitted. Policy DS2 gives more detail on the steps required to demonstrate this evidence.

54. The Supporting Statement explains that the building was the church was last used for its original religious purpose in early 2019 and has stood vacant since then, after being closed by the church due to falling attendance. The building was deconsecrated and sold by the Methodist Church in May 2020. The Parish Council has not objected to the loss of the church as a community facility, although it has raised issues about car parking.
55. In terms of alternative uses that might meet a community need, the application included a Development Appraisal, which was updated following the reduction from three to two dwellings. This sets out the likely cost of the development and its resulting value and concludes that the scheme would not generate sufficient profit to support the provision of affordable local needs housing, either in the conversion or elsewhere in the village. The key conclusion is: *“Overall this scheme results in gross development loss of 0.73% for an affordable scheme and a profit of 12.35% for a market scheme. These returns are less than the initial assessment which calculated figures of 2.01% and 14.69% respectively. To be deemed viable, profit margins should be in the order of 15 to 20%”.*

56. With regard to other community uses, there is a village hall on Macclesfield Road which meets the community's need for meeting spaces. The submitted Planning Statement explains that the applicant has spoken to the Parish Council and there is no demand for another community building. The statement also says that the applicant's consultants held conversations with local housing associations to determine whether this development would be appropriate for their needs (i.e. as an affordable scheme) but they confirmed that they would not be interested in a development scheme of this size.
57. The statement also says that the applicant had a number of conversations with local property experts and the local community regarding possible uses for the building. Given its rural location, a local commercial property agent did not see the chapel as especially feasible as commercial space and was very cautious in seeing rental or resale opportunities that would make conversion financially viable. In addition, discussions with a local parish Councillor suggested that they did not see demand for commercial space in the village. They pointed out that the village store closed a few years ago and that Whaley Bridge is very close, so provides all services.
58. In conclusion, it is considered that the proposal meets the requirements of policies HC4 and DMS2.

Impact of the proposed conversion on the building

59. Development Management policy DMC5 requires an assessment of significance to be with an application which relates to a heritage asset and reflects paragraph 189 of the National Planning Policy Framework. A Heritage Statement and Design and Access Statement have been submitted in support of the application, together with a Supporting Statement.
60. The additional Heritage Assessment that was submitted following the initial submission provides sufficient detail to meet the requirements of policy DMC5. The assessment argues that the proposals would be sympathetic to the existing building and that there would be no harmful changes to the appearance of the building.
61. Amendments have been made to the proposals during the course of the application at the request of Officers, particularly the reduction of the scheme from three to two dwellings so that it is a less intensive and intrusive conversion. The proposal will inevitably change the character and appearance of the building so some extent, particularly internally where the open space of the chapel will be subdivided, but this is likely to be the case with most alternative uses. Whilst the building is an important non-designated heritage asset, it is not a listed building, so the potential harm of the scheme needs to be balanced against the benefits of giving the building a beneficial use.
62. Externally the scheme uses the building's existing openings for windows and doors. The existing windows are thought to be replacements of the originals and are in a poor condition. The application proposes their replacement with triple-glazed aluminium framed units. Whilst the replacement of the existing windows is acceptable, the use of triple glazed units, which would have a much thicker profile, may be inappropriate. It is recommended that this be conditioned so that the applicant can provide more detail to demonstrate how such units would fit into the existing stonework and reveals, some of which are decorative.
63. In addition to this, a more recent stained-glass window on the rear elevation would be replaced with new glazed units, with the stained glass being reused elsewhere in the building, as requested by officers.
64. Discussions with the applicant have resulted in a number of changes to the design to make it more sympathetic to the character and appearance of the building. Subject to

further details being controlled and agreed through conditions, we now consider that the proposal is acceptable, retaining and re-using the building's existing features, principally its form and external appearance.

Impact on the Conservation Area

65. The site is within Kettlethulme Conservation Area, within a small group of traditional buildings in the Brookbottom area. The Conservation area was designated in 1995, but there is no Conservation Area Appraisal.
66. The development would retain an important building and provide it with a beneficial use. The external changes would not have a significant impact as they are largely internal or use existing openings. The most significant external changes will be the addition of rooflights on both roof pitches. As the church sits gable onto the road, the side roof pitches can be seen from along Paddock Lane, but are partly hidden by the adjacent buildings, so they would not be visually intrusive.
67. In summary the proposed conversion would conserve the character of the area and the setting of the Kettlethulme Conservation Area in accordance with policies GSP3, L3, and DMC8.

Impact on Residential Amenity

68. The nearest neighbouring properties are immediately adjacent to the church, with the one to the east being physically attached to the church (Brooklands) and the one to the west being separated by a narrow passage between the buildings. Other than adding a pitched roof above part of the flat roof on the rear elevation, there are no extensions proposed. In terms of the potential for overlooking, most of the windows would not directly overlook any neighbours and those that would have a view would be at an angle, other than the one in the north-facing gable, which could overlook the rear garden of Brooklands. It is therefore recommended that the lower panels of this be obscure glazed to retain the neighbour's privacy. The applicant also proposes to reuse glass from an existing stained glass window in existing window openings to provide some additional privacy. It is therefore considered that, subject to this, the development would not cause harm to residential amenity through overlooking or overshadowing. It is therefore in accordance with policy GSP3.

Ecological considerations

69. As noted above, a bat survey was submitted in response to the initial consultation response from the Authority's ecologist. This confirmed the presence of bats and made recommendations to avoid and mitigate any impact on protected species. The proposal now includes a dedicated bat loft that will be created over the single storey extension at the northern end of the building to provide void roosting habitat for brown long eared bats. Access will be via a louvered air vent on the north gable end just below the apex. An additional void will be retained at the southern end of the church, with access via the existing southern gable louvered vent
70. The ecologist's bat report concludes that *"the proposals would result in the loss of brown long-eared and common pipistrelle roosts considered to be of relatively low conservation status. Overall, the impacts are likely to be of low significance, and they would be very unlikely to affect the conservation status of the local bat population, particularly following implementation of the mitigation measures"*. The proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with policies L2 and DMC11.

Highways and Parking

71. The Highway Authority has raised questions about the availability of parking for the proposed dwellings. It notes that there is no on-site car parking and that it is proposed use nearby roadside parking; there is roadside parking on the opposite side of Paddock Lane, to the west of the site. This appears to be unrestricted and is used by local residents and visitors and was presumably used by the congregation of the church when it was in use. Some of the houses on Paddock Lane have off road parking, whereas the more traditional cottages do not.
72. Given that the church is an existing building with a lawful use that would have generated traffic and parked cars, and there is no possibility of on-site parking, the proposal is unlikely to generate a level of traffic that would cause highway problems, particularly when compared to traffic and parking the lawful use or other alternative uses could generate.

Climate Change Mitigation

73. A supporting Climate Change Mitigation Statement has been submitted with the application and updated to reflect the amendments to the scheme. This refers to the requirements of policy CC1 Climate Change mitigation and says that in making a sensitive use of an existing building, the proposal makes efficient use of land and buildings as well as natural resources and reduces waste. The statement says that the approach is inspired by Passivhaus principles, but that *“a pragmatic approach will be adopted to prioritise the most feasible and cost effective elements that deliver the majority of the environmental benefits in a way which is sensitive to conservation of the building. The main features will be extensive insulation of the building envelope, with highly insulated floor, walls and roof. In addition, high performance windows with triple glazing, minimised thermal bridging, high air tightness with consideration of mechanical ventilation with heat recovery.”*
74. As noted above the use of triple-glazed windows may cause some concern about the impact on the historic character of the building. The amended plans show two air source heat pumps located within the rear yard, although no further details are submitted. Subject to a condition to agree the precise details within the statement along with a verification notification following completion, overall, the proposal accords with policy CC1.

Conclusion

75. It is concluded that, as revised and reduced from three dwellings, the amended proposal would conserve the significance of a building which is a non-designated heritage asset by virtue of its architectural and historic character and its importance in its setting in Kettleshulme Conservation Area. The proposal would conserve the character of the locality and its biodiversity and would not harm highway safety or the amenity of neighbouring properties.
76. The proposals are therefore considered to be acceptable, subject to the imposition of planning conditions. In the absence of any further material considerations, it is considered that the proposal is in accordance with the development plan and is recommended for approval.

Human Rights

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

List of Background Papers (not previously published)

Nil

Report Author and Job Title

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