

**Parish: Topcliffe**  
Ward: Sowerby & Topcliffe  
**16**

Committee date: 12 October 2017  
Officer dealing: Laura Chambers  
Target date:

**17/00579/LBC**

**Listed Building Consent for alterations to chapel to form three apartments  
At Topcliffe Methodist Church, Church Street, Topcliffe  
For The Methodist Church, Thirsk & Northallerton Circuit**

**1.0 SITE, CONTEXT AND PROPOSAL**

- 1.1 The application property is a former Methodist chapel located at the junction of Long Street and Church Street, within the Development Limits of Topcliffe at the south east extent of the village. The building dates from 1840, is Grade II Listed, and is within the Topcliffe Conservation Area.
- 1.2 The chapel is no longer in use following closure in 2014, permission is sought to convert the building into three apartments. This application is accompanied by an associated application for planning permission.
- 1.3 Conversion of the building to form three apartments would be achieved by introducing a series of partitions to create two units at ground floor level. A new floor structure would be introduced at both first and second floor level, with the space subdivided by further partitions to create the third unit across the two upper floors. The pews and pulpit would be removed.
- 1.4 The external alterations proposed to facilitate the conversion include the introduction of five roof lights across the northern roof slope and an increase in height to the chimney stack on the eastern elevation of the building by 0.9m to reinstate its use. The small area of garden to the south of the building would remain as it is; there is no other outside space associated with the building.

**2.0 RELEVANT PLANNING AND ENFORCEMENT HISTORY**

- 2.1 15/00823/FUL - Change of use and internal alterations to form three apartments; Refused 3 March 2016.
- 2.2 15/00824/LBC - Listed Building Consent for internal alterations to form three apartments; Refused.
- 2.3 Application 15/00823/FUL was refused because of concern that the absence of adequate on-site parking space would result in vehicles being regularly parked outside the site on the highway to the detriment of the free flow of traffic and road safety. Application 15/00824/LBC was refused on the ground that, without the justification of planning permission for the residential conversion, the proposed works to the fabric of the listed building would not be appropriate.
- 2.4 17/00578/FUL - Revised application for alterations to chapel to form three apartments; Pending consideration.

**3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES**

- 3.1 The relevant policies are:

Core Policy CP16 – Protecting and Enhancing Natural and Man-made Assets  
Core Policy CP17 – Promoting High Quality Design

#### **4.0 CONSULTATIONS**

- 4.1 Parish Council – No comments received.
- 4.2 Public comments – One objection received, relating to the impact of the proposal on parking in the vicinity. This is considered in the associated application for planning permission.

#### **5.0 OBSERVATIONS**

- 5.1 The main issues to consider are: (i) design; and (ii) the impact on heritage assets.

##### Design

- 5.2 One of Hambleton's strategic planning objectives, set out in The Core Strategy Local Development Document (2007), is "To protect and enhance the historic heritage and the unique character and identity of the towns and villages by ensuring that new developments are appropriate in terms of scale and location in the context of settlement form and character."
- 5.3 Policies CP17 and DP32 require the highest quality of creative, innovative and sustainable design for buildings and landscaping that take account of local character and settings, promote local identity and distinctiveness and are appropriate in terms of use, movement, form and space.
- 5.4 The National Planning Policy Framework Planning supports this approach and, at paragraph 64, states that planning permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.
- 5.5 The submitted statement outlines the design features of the building that enhance its character and those that have influenced the design of the proposals. Given the development would see the conversion of a building with limited outside space, there would be limited options available in terms of achieving the proposed residential use, as such the statement does not make assessment of alternative options. It is noted however, that the original form of the building externally would be only minimally altered with the roof lights proposed being in the least conspicuous location to the rear, and that internally the original spaces will be referenced so it is apparent the form the building originally took.

##### Heritage assets

- 5.6 Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the Council to have special regard to the desirability of preserving any listed building affected by the proposal or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the Council to have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Topcliffe Conservation Area.
- 5.7 On assessment of the application it is considered that it would lead to less than substantial harm to heritage assets. The building is designated as a Listed Building Grade II wherein it is primarily included for its group value. It is the external features of the building, inclusive of the red brick in Flemish bond, Welsh slate roof, central

double leaf four panel door and round headed sash windows which are noted to be of special interest. The proposals seek to retain and make good these original features.

- 5.8 The proposed roof lights to the northern roof plane are designed to provide a source of natural light, forming a series of modest breaks within the roof plane. The detailing of the roof lights, finished flush to the plane of the roof, is considered to be appropriate to the historic significance of the building. The chimney stack to the east has been the subject of a previous alteration. The proposals specify a 900mm increase in the height to allow the stack to draw more efficiently. This is likely to be consistent with the original, historic form and consequently no objections are raised.
- 5.9 The works to facilitate the conversion are concentrated internally, it is evident that the introduction of new partitions would alter the sense of space within the building, however this impact would be limited as the existing mezzanine means the internal space is not currently entirely open while retention of the relief of existing openings and features such as the outline of the gallery and panelling. No features of recorded value would be lost while the partitions that are proposed would be reversible changes. In light of the limited amenity space the use of the building as self-contained apartments is considered to be logical, as opposed to that of a family home.
- 5.10 The sympathetic and modest nature of the proposed works are such that the scheme is considered to preserve the special interest of this Listed Building and surrounding conservation area, whilst promoting a high standard of design in accordance with LDF Core Strategy Policies CP16 and CP17 and Development Policies DP28 and DP32.
- 5.11 Paragraph 134 of the NPPF 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.
- 5.12 The proposed development would see a viable use for a currently vacant building being secured without detriment to the historic value and character of the listed building or the conservation area it is within and therefore the proposed works to the listed building are acceptable.

## **6.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 6.1 That subject to any outstanding consultations permission is **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:
1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun within three years of the date of this permission.
  2. The permission hereby granted shall not be undertaken other than in complete accordance with the drawing(s) and/or details received by Hambleton District Council on 07/03/17 unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
  3. Prior to the development commencing, details of the cross section of the roof lights hereby approved, together with details of the materials, method of construction and opening mechanism and opening movement of all windows shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Following such written approval, all installed windows shall conform to that approved specification.

The reasons for the above conditions are:

1. To ensure compliance with Section 18A of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
2. In order that the development is undertaken in a form that is appropriate to the character and appearance of its surroundings and in accordance with the Development Plan Policies CP16 and CP17.
3. To ensure that the appearance of the roof lights are appropriate to the character and appearance of the Listed Building.