

Officers Report

Planning Application No: 143981

PROPOSAL: Planning application for change of use from former Methodist Chapel to a dwelling to include interior alterations and exterior refurbishment.

LOCATION: The Former Methodist Chapel Wickenby Road Lissington
Lincoln LN3 5AE

WARD: Dunholme and Welton

APPLICANT NAME: Miss Jo-Anne Parsons

TARGET DECISION DATE: 04/03/2022

DEVELOPMENT TYPE: Change of Use

CASE OFFICER: Richard Green

RECOMMENDED DECISION: Grant with conditions attached.

The application is being referred to the Planning Committee for determination as the applicant is from the immediate family of an officer of the Council.

Description:

The application site is a detached single storey former chapel which is situated close to the highway within the settlement of Lissington. The application site has no amenity area associated with the Chapel although does include a small area of hardstanding to the southeast next to the highway. The chapel is currently not in use and there is evidence of dilapidation on the exterior of the building, including on the roof.

To the south east of the site is Wickenby Road with a field beyond. To the north west is a two storey detached dwelling (Snowdon Grundy Lane) and to the northeast is a driveway and off road car parking belonging to 'The Croft. Wickenby Lane' which is also a two storey detached dwelling. To the north to the rear of the Chapel is the wider garden belonging to 'The Croft'.

The application seeks permission for a change of use from a former Methodist chapel to a one bed single storey dwelling to include interior alterations and exterior refurbishment.

Relevant history:

135016 - Planning application for change of use from former Methodist Chapel to dwelling. Granted 13/02/2017.

Representations:

Chairman/Ward member(s): No representations received to date.

Lissington Parish Meeting: We welcome this application to take into use a property which has been unoccupied for at least 20 years, and is becoming an eyesore, and we thank the applicant for trying to preserve an iconic village landmark. The stone plaque on the front wall, engraved “Methodist Chapel 1863”, should be retained to mark the history of the building.

The applicant usefully emailed WLDC on 14 December 2021, to confirm that the heating will be electric, so there is no need for us to consider space for storing oil/gas/solid fuel.

Septic tank and surface water soakaway. The original plans for a septic tank and surface water soakaway at the front of the building are under review at the time of this response. We may therefore wish to make further comment later.

Car parking. The applicant should be asked to confirm that the existing 1600mm wide 150mm high concrete plinth will be removed along the whole length of the building and lowered to the same level as the road surface, so long as plinth removal does not weaken the building structurally. This creates a parking area abutting the building, which is the only space for safe off-road parking. Otherwise, cars would have to be parked on the carriageway. The applicant should please confirm that the car parking space will be hard up against the Chapel wall. This would be on top of the septic tank and surface water soakaway if the proposals were to remain as in the original application.

External Storage. Application Section 7 says wheelie bins will also be stored at the front of the Chapel, and hopefully they will be hidden in a cupboard - for aesthetic reasons.

Windows Overlooking Neighbouring Property. The existing and proposed plans both show 3 windows (2 in the NW wall and a single round one in the NE wall) which overlook the neighbouring property The Croft. We request that all 3 windows remain fixed and fully glazed with privacy glass which maintains The Croft residents’ privacy.

Access to Neighbouring Land. There is very limited access to the Chapel building. This will make it almost inevitable that there will be significant impact upon The Croft’s property in particular, specifically to the landscaped garden, and that it will cause both damage and nuisance directly to the residents of The Croft. East View will also be affected, but to a lesser extent.

Road Safety and job scheduling during conversion work. The creation of the off-road parking space referred to above needs to be scheduled very early in the project. This will then enable a tradesperson’s van to be parked in this space, and off the carriageway, for the duration of the project. We disagree with LCC Highways 10 December 2021 letter that this proposal does not have an impact on the public highway.

Working hours. Permitted times of work will need to be stated before planning permission is finalised.

Local residents: No representations received to date.

Building Control: Definitely not a septic tank. A package treatment plant possibly, but it would have to work with crate soakaways and this isn't always possible. The tank isn't so much of a problem (it can be designed and installed to have no effect on the building or road) but the soakaway discharge adjacent the building and highway is.

LCC Highways and Lead Local Flood Authority: This proposal to convert former Methodist Chapel to a dwelling does not have an impact on the Public Highway or Surface Water Flood Risk. Having given due regard to the appropriate local and national planning policy guidance (in particular the National Planning Policy Framework), Lincolnshire County Council (as Highway Authority and Lead Local Flood Authority) has concluded that the proposed development is acceptable and accordingly, does not wish to object to this planning application.

Archaeology: The proposed development involves conversion of the former Lissington Free Methodist Chapel. The chapel is recorded in the Lincolnshire Historic Environment Record, and was identified as part of the County Council's previous Chapels research project. It could be considered a non-designated heritage asset, having been built in 1863 and being of local historic importance and architectural interest.

It is recommended that historic building recording is required prior to development as the proposed conversion will involve alteration to historic fabric and subdivision of the historic interior. It is therefore beneficial to create a record of the chapel before any alteration or conversion takes place.

Recommendation: It is recommended that, prior to any conversion or alteration, the developer should be required to undertake full historic building recording.

Relevant Planning Policies:

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Here, the Development Plan comprises the provisions of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (adopted in April 2017).

Development Plan:

The following policies are particularly relevant:

*Central Lincolnshire Local Plan 2012-2036

LP1: A Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

LP2: The Spatial Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy

LP3: Level and Distribution of Growth

LP4: Growth in Villages.
LP13: Accessibility and Transport
LP14: Managing Water Resources and Flood Risk
LP15: Community Facilities
LP17: Landscape, Townscape and Views
LP25: The Historic Environment
LP26: Design and Amenity

**With consideration to paragraph 219 of the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) the above policies are consistent with the NPPF (July 2021). LP1 is consistent with NPPF paragraph 11 as they both apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. LP2, LP3 & LP4 are consistent with NPPF chapter 5 as they both seek to deliver a sufficient supply of homes. LP5 is consistent with chapter 6 of the NPPF as they both seek to create a strong and sustainable economic growth. LP13 is consistent with NPPF paragraphs 110-113 as they both seek to ensure an efficient and safe transport network that offers a range of transport choices. LP14 is consistent with paragraphs 159 to 169 of the NPPF as they both seek to avoid putting inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding. LP15 is consistent with paragraphs 84 and 93 of the NPPF as they both seek to protect existing community facilities and provide for new and enhanced community facilities. LP17 is consistent with NPPF paragraph 130 & 174 as they seek to protect valued landscapes and recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and are sympathetic to the built environment. LP25 is consistent with chapter 16 of the NPPF as they both seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment and LP26 is consistent with section 12 of the NPPF in requiring well designed places. The above policies are therefore attributed full weight.*

<https://www.n-kesteven.gov.uk/central-lincolnshire/local-plan/>

Draft Central Lincolnshire Local Plan:

The first round of consultation on the Draft Central Lincolnshire Local Plan has now completed. The consultation ran for 8 weeks from 30 June to 24 August 2021. The NPPF states:

“48. Local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:
(a) the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);
(b) the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and
(c) the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to this Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given) 24.”

The early stage of preparation, because consultation has only just completed on the Draft Plan and untested consistency with the Framework mean some

weight (but it is still limited) is given to the policies it contains relevant to this proposal at this moment.

<https://www.n-kesteven.gov.uk/central-lincolnshire/local-plan/>

Neighbourhood Plan:

No plan is currently being prepared.

National policy & guidance (Material Consideration)

- **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It is a material consideration in planning decisions. The most recent iteration of the NPPF was published in July 2021.

Paragraph 219 states:

"Existing [development plan] policies should not be considered out-of-date simply because they were adopted or made prior to the publication of this Framework. Due weight should be given to them, according to their degree of consistency with this Framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given)."

- **National Planning Practice Guidance**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>
- **National Design Guide (2019)**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide>
- **National Design Code (2021)**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-model-design-code>

Main issues:

- Principle of the Development
- Residential Amenity
- Visual Impact
- Non Designated Heritage Asset
- Archaeology
- Foul and Surface Water Drainage
- Highway Safety and Car Parking
- Other Matters

Assessment:

Principle of Development

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The site is located within the built footprint of Lissington and comprises a redundant single storey chapel between two existing dwellings and is considered to be in the first category of land to be developed under the land availability sequential test in Policy LP4.

In the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan, Lissington is designated as a small village (LP2) within which it is acknowledged there can be up to 10% growth with small scale development of a limited nature (around 4 dwellings per site) being accommodated. As of the 21/01/2022 the following table shows that there is remaining growth of 4 dwellings to be accommodated in North Kelsey:

<https://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/my-services/planning-and-building/planning-policy/housing-growth-in-medium-and-small-villages-policy-lp4/>

The building subject of this application is a former Methodist Chapel (Use Class F1) which has been closed for many years and there is evidence of dilapidation on the exterior of the building, including on the roof. It is considered that the former Methodist Chapel is demonstrably no longer fit for purpose and the site is not viable to be redeveloped for a new community facility in accordance with Policy LP15 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan.

The Church of St John is also located approximately 233 metres to the north east of the site and planning permission (135016) has been granted in the past to change the use of this former Methodist Chapel to a dwelling.

It is considered that the former Methodist Chapel is demonstrably no longer fit for purpose and the site is not viable to be redeveloped for a new community facility in accordance with Policy LP15 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan. Furthermore, the principle to develop one dwelling here is acceptable as the site is within the built form of the village (an appropriate location) and will contribute to the allocated housing growth apportioned to Lissington in the adopted Central Lincolnshire Local Plan.

Residential Amenity

Local Plan Policy LP26 states that planning permission will be granted for new development provided the proposal will not adversely affect the residential amenity of neighbouring properties by virtue of overlooking, overshadowing, loss of light or over dominance. The policy also applies to future occupants of development proposals under consideration.

The application seeks permission for a change of use from a former Methodist chapel to a one bed single storey dwelling. No extensions are proposed, and there are no expected issues with loss of light or over shadowing.

In terms of openings the two existing windows and an existing solid entrance door will be utilised in the front (south eastern) elevation which will overlook

Wickenby Road with an open field beyond. The side (south west) elevation will have no openings and the side (north east) elevation will utilise an existing small round window to the entrance lobby. The rear (north west) elevation will utilise two existing windows and a small existing window to a store room, the two existing windows to the rear will overlook 'The Croft's' garden. These windows are currently obscure glazed and a condition will be put in place to ensure that they remain obscure glazed following the conversion of the Chapel.

Some small level of noise will likely result from the application being used as a dwelling, but this is not expected to be unacceptable, from what would be a 1 bedroom dwelling (or from its current authorised F1 Local Community and Learning use). The proposal does not include any garden space as part of the proposal and therefore any noise nuisance caused by the proposal would be contained within the chapel building itself. Further to this the building has been previously used as a chapel which would have resulted in a certain level of noise originally arising from the site. It is therefore considered that the proposal will not harm the living conditions of future occupiers of the proposed dwelling or neighbouring occupiers.

Visual Impact

Local Plan Policy LP17 states that to protect and enhance the intrinsic value of our landscape and townscape, including the setting of settlements, proposals should have particular regard to maintaining and responding positively to any natural and man-made features within the landscape and townscape which positively contribute to the character of the area, such as (but not limited to) historic buildings and monuments, other landmark buildings, topography, trees and woodland, hedgerows, walls, water features, field patterns and intervisibility between rural historic settlements. Where a proposal may result in significant harm, it may, exceptionally, be permitted if the overriding benefits of the development demonstrably outweigh the harm: in such circumstances the harm should be minimised and mitigated.

Local Plan Policy LP26 states that all development proposals must take into consideration the character and local distinctiveness of the area (and enhance or reinforce it, as appropriate) and create a sense of place. As such, and where applicable, proposals will be required to demonstrate, to a degree proportionate to the proposal, that they are well designed in relation to siting, height, scale, massing and form. The policy also states that the proposal should respect the existing topography, landscape character, streetscene and local distinctiveness of the surrounding area and should use appropriate, high quality materials which reinforce or enhance local distinctiveness. Any important local view into, out of or through the site should not be harmed.

It is proposed to convert and re-furbish the existing single storey chapel to form a one bed single storey dwelling. Only existing openings will be utilised in the conversion. It is therefore considered that the proposal will not harm the character and appearance of the street-scene

Non Designated Heritage Asset

The proposed development involves the conversion of the former Lissington Free Methodist Chapel. The chapel is recorded in the Lincolnshire Historic Environment Record and is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset.

Policy LP25 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan states that development proposals should protect, conserve and seek opportunities to enhance the historic environment of Central Lincolnshire. The proposal will retain the former chapel and will utilise existing openings and appropriate materials. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with the NPPF and Policy LP25 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan.

Archaeology

The Historic Environment Officer at Lincolnshire County Council recommends that the developer undertakes a historic building record for the former chapel. A condition will be attached to the decision notice if it is minded to grant permission.

Foul and Surface Water Drainage

The application form states that a septic tank will be utilised for foul sewerage and states that a soakaway will be used for the disposal of surface water.

Building Control have stated that a *'Definitely not a septic tank. A package treatment plant possibly, but it would have to work with crate soakaways and this isn't always possible. The tank isn't so much of a problem (it can be designed and installed to have no effect on the building or road) but the soakaway discharge adjacent the building and highway is.'*

The National Planning Policy Guidance (Paragraph: 020 Reference ID: 34-020-20140306) states *'Where a connection to a public sewage treatment plant is not feasible (in terms of cost and/or practicality) a package sewage treatment plant can be considered. This could either be adopted in due course by the sewerage company or owned and operated by a sewerage undertaker appointed under a new appointment or variation. The package sewage treatment plant must comply with the general binding rules, or a permit will be required. A package sewage treatment plant must be used if the treated effluent is being discharged to surface water.'*

Therefore, the appropriateness of the intended method(s) cannot be assessed at this stage; if permission was to be granted a planning condition to secure full foul and surface water drainage details would be attached to the decision notice.

Highway Safety and Car Parking

Policy LP13 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan states that development proposals which contribute towards an efficient and safe transport network that offers a range of transport choices for the movement of people and goods will be supported.

Concerns have been raised by the Parish Council in relation to where parking could be provided for the dwelling. Whilst Wickenby Road is wide enough to

accommodate on street parking, there is a small area of hardstanding to the front of the Methodist Chapel which is set back from the highway, this area is to be used as parking and can accommodate a single car without obstructing the highway.

Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) Highways do not object to be proposal.

Paragraph 110 of the NPPF states that in assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that:

- a) appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location;
- b) safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users;
- c) the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code; and
- d) any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.

The proposed car parking detailed above is considered to be sufficient for the proposed one-bedroom dwelling and the proposal is considered to accord with Policy LP13 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan and the NPPF.

Other Matters:

Bin Storage

No details have been provided in terms of an area for bin storage/collection. An appropriately worded condition will be attached to the decision notice if it is minded to grant planning permission.

Stone Plaque

An appropriately worded condition will be attached to the decision notice if it is minded to grant planning permission to retain the stone stone plaque on the front wall, engraved 'Methodist Chapel 1863'.

Garden Provision

A garden space or area of amenity is not included due to restricted nature of the site. It is however considered acceptable due to the modest size of living space created which can only accommodate a single bedroom and does not represent a reason to withhold consent.

Heating

Electric heating will be used negating the need for an external coal/wood store, oil/LPG tank or LPG bottles, as there is no mains gas in this location.

Access to Neighbouring Land

This is not a material planning consideration.

Road Safety and job scheduling during conversion work.

There is off road parking.

Working hours

The majority of work will be internal, a condition for working hours is therefore not considered to be needed. Noise at unsocial hours can be covered via Environmental Protection legislation.

Balancing evaluation and conclusion:

The decision has been considered against policy LP1: A Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development, LP2: The Spatial Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy, LP3: Level and Distribution of Growth, LP4: Growth in Villages, LP13: Accessibility and Transport, LP14: Managing Water Resources and Flood Risk, LP15: Community Facilities, LP17: Landscape, Townscape and Views, LP25: The Historic Environment and LP26: Design and Amenity of the adopted Central Lincolnshire Local Plan and the guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance.

It is considered that the former Methodist Chapel is demonstrably no longer fit for purpose and the site is not viable to be redeveloped for a new community facility in accordance with Policy LP15 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan. Furthermore, the principle to develop one dwelling here is acceptable as the site is within the built form of the village (an appropriate location) and will contribute to the allocated housing growth apportioned to Lissington in the adopted Central Lincolnshire Local Plan.

It is also considered that the proposal would not have a harmful impact on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers or that of the proposed dwelling and will not have a harmful visual impact on the street scene. Furthermore, it is considered that the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of this non-designated heritage asset and provides an appropriate level of car parking.

Recommendation: Grant planning permission subject to the conditions below

Conditions stating the time by which the development must be commenced:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To conform with Section 91 (1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

Conditions which apply or require matters to be agreed before the development commenced:

2. No works shall take place until a full historic building recording (see notes to applicants below) of the chapels (interior and exterior) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the preparation and implementation of an appropriate scheme of archaeological mitigation and in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

Conditions which apply or are to be observed during the course of the development:

3. With the exception of the detailed matters referred to by the conditions of this consent, the development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawings: LC2020-02 dated 10/11/2021, LC2020-04 dated 10/11/2021 and LC2020-01 dated 10/11/2021. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the details shown on the approved plans and in any other approved documents forming part of the application.

Reason: To ensure the development proceeds in accordance with the approved plans in the interests of proper planning.

4. The materials used in the development shall match those stated on the application form and drawing No. LC2020-04 dated 10/11/2021.

Reason: To ensure the use of appropriate materials to accord with the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy LP25 and LP26 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan.

5. The stone plaque on the front (south eastern) elevation of the building as shown on Drawing No. LC2020-04 dated 10/11/2021 shall be retained thereafter.

Reason: To ensure the use the heritage of this non-designated asset is preserved in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy LP25 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan.

Conditions which apply or relate to matters which are to be observed following completion of the development:

6. The dwelling hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the two large ground floor windows to the north west (rear) elevation (Drawing No: LC2020-02 dated 10/11/2021 and LC2020-04 dated 10/11/2021) have been fitted with obscured glazing and retained as such thereafter.

Reason: To prevent unacceptable levels of overlooking on neighbouring properties, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy LP26 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan.

7. Notwithstanding Drawing No. LC2020-02 dated 10/11/2021, no occupation of the proposed dwelling, other than internal repairs shall take place until a scheme for the disposal of foul and surface waters (including the results of soakaway/percolation tests if necessary) have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved details and prior to occupation of the dwelling.

Reason: To ensure adequate drainage facilities are provided to serve the development in accordance with Policy LP14 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan.

8. No occupation of the proposed dwelling, other than internal repairs shall take place until detailed plans showing the location, design and materials of proposed facilities for the disposal and storage of any refuse/recyclable materials, including details of any bin storage, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved details shall be available for use prior to the uses first commencing and shall be permanently retained thereafter, unless otherwise first approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interest of public health, residential amenity, visual amenity and highway safety in accordance with the NPPF and Policies LP13, LP17 and LP26 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan.

Conditions which apply or relate to matters which are to be observed following completion of the development:

None.

Notes to the Applicant

Archaeology

Please contact the Historic Environment Team at Lincolnshire County Council for advice on a brief for the Historic Building Record (condition 2) on 01522 782070.

Human Rights Implications:

The above objections, considerations and resulting recommendation have had regard to Article 8 and Article 1 of the First Protocol of the European Convention for Human Rights Act 1998. The recommendation will not interfere with the applicant's and/or objector's right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence.

Legal Implications:

Although all planning decisions have the ability to be legally challenged it is considered there are no specific legal implications arising from this report