

**Design, Access and Heritage statement to accompany a  
planning application for the change of use of a former  
church building to a residential property at Chapel  
Close, Main Street, Staxton.**

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## **1.0 Site Description**

**1.1** The application site is located in the village settlement of Staxton, a settlement located at a mid point between Malton to the west and Scarborough to the north. The application site is located on the eastern edge of the built up area of the village to the south of Main Street. To the north across Main Street are residential properties. To the south, the site abuts the garden to a detached residential two storey property. An access to Main Street runs along the western boundary of the application site serving the detached dwelling.

**1.2** To the south and west of the application site is the main urban framework of the village and to the south of this development is the A64, the Old Malton Road. To the east of the application site is an area of “visually attractive open land” which stretches between Main Street to the north to Old Malton Road to the south.

**1.3** The application site contains a single storey Victorian church building which is a Listed Building. The building is set back from Main Street and the set back consists of a mown grassed area through which a pathway links the front door with the highway. The building is a brick built structure constructed of red brick with a slate roof. The front elevation contains 3 feature windows, a single wooden doorway with a stone date stone above. The two side elevations have no openings and on the rear elevation are three further windows which mirror those on the front elevation.

## **2.0 The applicant's proposals**

**2.1** A previous application for a similar proposal was withdrawn and this resubmission has addressed issues raised with the previous application. The applicant wishes to change the use of a former church building to a residential property. The application site is located within the built up area of Staxton between existing development and a visually attractive area of undeveloped land. The building currently is disused.

**2.2** The conversion scheme would result in internal alterations to provide an additional floor and the resulting building would therefore have a ground and a first floor. A new staircase would link the two floors. The ground floor would consist of an open plan living and kitchen area together with a utility room and downstairs toilet. The existing ground floor level would be lowered to create sufficient headroom for two floors. The existing front door would be retained and an internal step created. The existing fanlight frame to the door is to be adjusted. Upstairs the accommodation would consist of two bedrooms and a bathroom.

**2.3** Externally the three windows on the front elevation would be retained with any necessary repairs undertaken to the frames and glazing. The glazing will be replaced with slimline double glazed units. On the eastern side elevation one new fixed light window would be inserted. The three windows on the rear elevation would be retained with any necessary repairs undertaken to the frames and glazing. All the existing brickwork would be repointed.

**2.4** The roof would be the subject of a detailed assessment with as much of the existing slate retained as possible. If a large number of slates need to be replaced then any new slates would be placed on the rear, non public, roof elevation. four small new conservation rooflights would be placed within the roof area, two on the rear roof elevation and one each on the two hipped roof side elevations. Two small triangular lead extraction vents would be inserted on the front elevation.

2.5. Surface water drainage from the roof would be fed through replacement cast iron rain water guttering and downpipes to discharge onto the grassed area as now. A new connection would be made into the existing public sewer in the adjacent highway.

### 3.0 Economic context

3.1 The new development would be likely to give a stimulus to existing business operations in the area through the development process. The proposal would help strengthen the economic viability of the settlement by securing a long term use for this unused property.

### 4.0 Relevant planning policies

#### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021

##### *The presumption in favour of sustainable development*

*11. Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.*

*For plan-making this means that:*

*a) all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects;*

*b) strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas<sup>6</sup>, unless:*

*i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area; or*

*ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole. For decision-taking this means:*

*c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or*

*d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*

*i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*

*ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole. As established through statements of common ground (see paragraph 27). The policies referred to are those in this Framework (rather than those in development plans) relating to: habitats sites (and those sites listed in paragraph 180) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a National Park (or within the Broads Authority) or defined as Heritage Coast; irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in footnote 67); and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change*

## ***Supporting a prosperous rural economy***

***84. Planning policies and decisions should enable: a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings; b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;***

## ***16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment***

***189. Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value<sup>66</sup>. These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations<sup>67</sup>.***

***190. Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. This strategy should take into account: a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; b) the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring; c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and d) opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place***

## **4.2 National Design Guide (NDG)**

The National Design Guide (NDG) was published in October 2019 by the MHCLG and reinforces the aim of the NPPF to create high quality places and buildings. It states in paragraph 8

*The underlying purpose for design quality and the quality of new development at all scales is to create well designed and well built places that benefit people and communities.*

The NDG provides an overarching framework which has been prepared in the context of anticipated climate change, changing home ownership models and changes in technology.

## **4.3 Local Plan policies from the Ryedale Local Plan Strategy Document**

### ***Section 3 Aspirations and Strategy***

*Service villages – limited smallscale housing growth*

*Policy SP1 General Location of Development and settlement Hierarchy*

*– Staxton is a local service centre.*

*Policy SP2 Delivery and Distribution of new housing*

*– Limited to small scale sites in or adjacent to Development Limits*

- *Victorian churches throughout the York Wolds*
- *Encourage the sensitive re-use and adaptation of historic buildings disused and in danger of becoming on the Historic Buildings at Risk register if a new use is not found.*

*Policy SP13 Landscape*

*The quality, character and value of Ryedale's diverse landscape will be protected and enhanced.*

*Policy SP 16 Design*

*Policy SP19 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development*

## **5.0 Planning considerations**

**5.1** The NPPF is clear in defining that all new development should be sustainable. The village of Staxton is an existing settlement which has sustainable road and transport routes linking it to the settlement of Scarborough to the north and to the settlement of Malton to the west. The application site is considered to be located within a sustainable area thus meeting the requirements of the NPPF and Policy SP19 of the Ryedale Local Plan Strategy.

**5.1** The site lies within the Development Limits for Staxton as defined in the Ryedale Local Plan Strategy. Staxton is defined as a village settlement where new development will be supported in Policies SP1 and SP2 as it is considered a “Local Service Centre and Service Village”.

**5.2** Policy S5 (Delivering Housing Development) sets out the required number of new dwellings to be built within the Local Plan Area.

**5.3** Policy SP2 aims to target new development to small scale sites within or adjacent to settlement Development Limits in villages like Staxton. The application site is within the built up urban framework of the settlement of Staxton.

**5.4** Policy SP12 supports the re-use of and adaptation of historic buildings to prevent them falling into disrepair. The church falls into this category as it is a Listed Building which has a Victorian heritage and is currently empty and disused.

**5.5** The site is situated within the village development limits and in an area with a well established pattern of development. The site is well related to the existing development patterns and the principle of conversion to a dwelling is considered acceptable and in accordance with the principles of the NPPF and the National Design Guide.

**4.6** The proposals seek to change the use of an existing building formerly used as a church to a single residential property. The site is located adjacent to a “Visually Important Undeveloped Area” as defined in the Local Plan Strategy and elevational changes would be minimal and in accordance with retaining the character of the existing structure and providing internally modern living space. Parking facilities would be accommodated within the adjacent highway without impacting on other existing residential properties. If the building returned to a church or other commercial use then on street parking requirements would significantly increase. A church or commercial use would generate significantly more traffic movements and parking requirements than a domestic use.

**4**

**4.8** The proposals seek to retain the character of the existing building by minimising external

elevational changes and retaining the overall appearance of the building and its scale. By safeguarding the character of the building it is deemed that the proposals comply with the requirements of the NPPF, the NDG and Policies SP12 (Heritage) and SP16 (Design) of the Local Plan Strategy.

4.9 The proposals intend to utilise the existing foul water drainage systems running through the village, surface water would be disposed of, as now, through the water dispersing within the grassed area. As the structure exists there would be no additional pressure on existing drainage and water systems.

## 5.0 Heritage statement

5.1 The following is the record of the Listed Building as detailed on the English Heritage website.

### **METHODIST CHURCH**

#### **Heritage Category:**

**Listed Building**

**Grade: II**

#### **List Entry Number:**

**1149637**

#### **Date first listed:**

**14-Dec-1987**

#### **Statutory Address:**

**METHODIST CHURCH, MAIN STREET**

#### **National Grid Reference:**

**TA 01867 79212**

**WILLERBY MAIN STREET TA 07 NW (south side) Staxton 7/87 Methodist Church - II Primitive Methodist Chapel. 1847 on datestone. Red brick in Flemish bond, with slate roof. Rectangular on plan. 1-storey, 3-window front. Right-of-centre 4-panel door with radial fanlight. Windows are tall sashes with glazing bars and radial heads. Painted stone sills. All openings are round-arched. Date panel over door reads: PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHAPEL AD 1847 Hipped roof. Rear repeats the front, without door.**

**Listing NGR: TA018677921**

5.2 The building is a typical church building from the Victorian era and replicated in several other churches throughout North Yorkshire. The main architectural features are the red Flemish bond brickwork structure with a steep slate roof, the 3 large windows repeated on the front and rear elevation and the imposing doorway and datestone on the front elevation.

5.3 It is considered vital that a use be found to bring the building back to life.

5.4 The scheme as submitted has respected the key architectural elements of the building and would produce a sustainable use which would safeguard the building for many years. As with all conversions compromises have to be made to achieve an acceptable development.

The four conservation rooflights are a new addition but again they are small in scale and such additions have been accepted on many Listed Buildings nationally. The only new window opening, like the rooflights, is necessary to provide adequate internal natural light and this new contemporary addition is considered acceptable as part of a package to bring a new use to this Listed Building. Without these elements the building would continue to remain unused and as Policy SP12 states;

*SP12 Heritage*

- *Victorian churches throughout the York Wolds*
- *Encourage the sensitive re-use and adaptation of historic buildings disused and in danger of becoming on the Historic Buildings at Risk register if a new use is not found.*

## **6.0 Conclusion**

**6.1** There are no constraints on development from a physical/social/economic context because of the following. The site is located inside the development limits for the settlement of Staxton. The settlement is well established and of a size where new development is supported through the Local Plan Strategy. The proposals are in a sustainable location and served by good transport, bus and road links.

**6.2** The proposals have been designed to retain the overall character of the existing building and thus allowing it to continue to contribute to the setting and character of the village settlement within which the building is set.

**6.4** The proposed development is not considered to pose a risk to highway safety and by utilising the existing drainage systems there would be no impact on existing services or flood risk.

**6.5** With regard to the provisions of both National and Local planning policies and the material considerations relevant to the site, it is deemed that the proposals are acceptable and that these planning proposals should be approved.