

22 November 2024
Cover letter 221124



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Dear Katherine,

**Former Congregational Church, Street Lane, Ardingly, West Sussex, RH17 6UB
PLANNING APPLICATION REF: DM/24/2317**

We write on behalf of Pentas Properties further to your email on the 11th November 2024.

Alongside this letter which seeks to address each of the points of your email in turn, please also find the following accompanying updated documents from

- Proposed Ground Floor Plan 24021-HNW-ZZ-00-DR-A-2200 P03
- Proposed North and East Elevations 24021-HNW-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-2300 P03
- Proposed South and West Elevations 24021-HNW-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-2301 P04

Red Line extent

The application red line has been drawn based on boundaries shown on the Land Registry filed plan which are set on OS mapping which is surveyed at 1:2500. Clearly this is quite an approximate scale and we have not sought to specifically either include or exclude the boundary wall at the front eastern edge we have just followed the land registry line. It is not the place of the planning system to act as arbiter on what physical features are included or excluded in a specific ownership, the red line simply seeks to identify the application site. Key is that the neighbours are aware of, and have had an opportunity to comment on, the application, which they clearly have.

No works are proposed as part of this planning application to the boundary with Street Lane House. This will remain as existing and the applicant does not propose any works upon land owned by Street Lane House. Accordingly we do not see any need to alter the red line in this location.

Conversely comment was previously made with regard the alteration of the red line adjacent to The Manse. Here the use of the side path was material to the planning submission in terms of land ownership, with the terms of use over this land from the Former Congregational Hall requiring this land to be excluded from the red line accordingly this required a red line amendment.

Justification of Proposed Use

It is noted that Ardingly Parish Council in its letter of representation (14th October 2024) in principle support the change of use of the building.

The Conservation Officer considers the proposal to preserve the character and appearance of the conservation, providing the Case Officer is satisfied satisfactory justification of the change of use is provided.

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“In summary therefore although the principle of the change of use raises concerns in terms of the impact on the character of the Conservation Area, if it is accepted that this is justified and provides the optimum long term beneficial use for the building the physical works which are also proposed are not considered contentious, subject to detail.

With the above proviso the proposal is therefore considered to preserve the character and appearance of the Ardingly Conservation Area”.

As a starting point it is set out within the Planning Statement that rental returns from the previous use were barely covering the required upkeep of the building and thus not ensuring its long-term future. We have also provided detail within the Planning Statement that Ardingly village already benefits from the provision of community hall space as per the requirements of DP25. Indeed, this building has not been used for wider community purposes since it was a church, it has been leased to a private commercial operator.

The Former Congregational Church building by virtue of its age, layout and size does not represent an attractive proposition for alternative business use, particularly when alternative higher quality facilities are located close by.

Furthermore, any business locating within the building would require a greater level of car parking than a residential use and most likely create a level of parking demand which cannot be readily facilitated within the vicinity of the site. This would cause likely nuisance to residents significantly over that of a residential dwellinghouse.

The conversion of the building to residential use will ensure the long-term future of the building is protected with minimal level of intervention upon the external fabric and character of the building particularly when viewed from The Street and the conversion of the building to residential use will also have minimal amenity impact upon neighbouring residents.

In summary it is demonstrated that the residential conversion presents the optimum and most appropriate viable use to ensure the long-term upkeep of the building. The appearance of the building will remain unchanged from Street Lane ensuring no harm to the appearance and setting of the Conservation Area.

Concerns regarding the use of proposed composite fenestration

The proposed windows to the rear portion of building will be in a similar location to the existing window openings.

The Conservation Officer suggests that window details can be provided via condition.

“Although the use of composite window and door frames may not be considered appropriate in the context of this historic building. Further detail of this aspect could be required by condition.”

The applicant is happy to agree to this approach to ensure that the LPA retains an appropriate level of control relating to the proposed details of the windows.

Insufficient outlook to the Master Bedroom

An updated internal layout has been prepared by HNW to provide the master bedroom with an additional window and door directly out into the rear garden, which will provide enhanced outlook from this bedroom. Additional natural light will be provided into this room via the existing window which will be obscured glazed .

Side Windows facing Street Lane House

The windows facing Street Lane House will remain obscured as per the existing position.

Summary

We trust that this letter and the associated amendments appropriately address the concerns raised, to enable a swift and positive determination of the application.

Yours sincerely

John Ainsworth

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Senior Planner