

From: Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 01 October 2024 16:33:32 UTC+01:00
To: "Katherine Williams" <Katherine.Williams@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: DM/24/2317 Congregational Church, Street Lane, Ardingly

Hi Katherine

Comments on the above planning application.

The proposed development site is a former congregational chapel located within the Ardingly Conservation Area. The building dates, from historical map regression, from the late 19th century. It is a modestly sized brick built chapel with a gabled tiled roof. It retains many period features including gothic arched stained glass windows, the original brick and timber porch with gothic arched doorway, polychrome brickwork with decorative terracotta insets, eaves detailing, and brick buttresses to the side elevation. The building was extended to the rear during the mid 20th century by a single storey gabled addition.

Although we have limited information currently in front of us regarding the history of the building, its architectural character and features, and historical illustrative and communal values as former place of worship for a small independent Protestant congregational church, of which there were at one time many in Sussex, in my opinion mean that it would be likely to be regarded as a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA), of special architectural and historic interest within the local context.

The building also makes a strong positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Ardingly Conservation Area.

It is within the setting of 1 and 2 Brickyard Cottages, immediately to the west on Street Lane, which are Grade II listed 17th century cottages, and within the wider settings of the former Oak Inn, a Grade II listed 17th century or earlier timber framed building a short distance further to the west, and 7 High Street, an 18th century or earlier cottage a short distance to the east.

The current proposal, which follows on from pre-application advice, is for the change of use and conversion of the building to residential use, with associated vehicle parking, cycle storage provision, bin storage and private amenity space.

As was pointed out at pre-application stage, the loss of the existing therapy centre use will result in a reduction in the vitality of this part of the Conservation Area, which is in close proximity to the High Street and other businesses. I would defer to the Case Officer in respect of the robustness of the justification given for the loss of this use - in heritage terms it would only be justified were it accepted that a residential conversion was the optimum viable use to ensure the long term upkeep of the building, and that a business or commercial use at this site was no longer viable. Without this, the change of use in itself would be considered to result in a degree of less than substantial harm to the character of the Conservation Area.

In terms of the physical works now proposed to the building in association with the conversion, the proposal has been amended following the pre-application proposal. No extension is now proposed; in contrast a slight reduction in footprint is suggested to cut back the line of the western gable to the 20th century rear extension in order to allow sufficient space for an off street car parking space adjacent to the building. As this is not part of the original building this work is not considered contentious subject to detail.

Various alterations to the position and proportions of the fenestration to the rear addition are proposed which are not considered contentious in principle, 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.

No alterations appear to be proposed externally to the original chapel building, and although the building is not listed it is noted that internally the proposal largely retains the open character of the chapel space, with only the insertion of a small mezzanine structure to one end of the room. This sympathetic approach to retaining the character of the original building is welcomed.

Hard and soft landscaping works are proposed around the building, in particular to create a small garden area to the south east of the building, as well as the above mentioned car parking space. These are not considered contentious subject to detail- the proposed new car parking space will not involve alteration to the apparently original boundary wall around the chapel, which terminates just to the north. We would however need to see details, including elevational drawings, of the proposed bike and bin stores, which should be annotated to show materials. These could be provided now or requested by condition.

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.

If approval is recommended I would suggest the following conditions:

- Details of new roofing and facing materials
- New brickwork to match existing adjacent work in colour, texture and bonding pattern, and colour, texture and style of pointing
- Eaves detail to the altered gable to the existing rear extension to match existing in form, profile and materials
- Rainwater goods to be of painted metal
- Detailed drawings, at an appropriate large scale, and annotated to show materials and finishes, of the following:
 - - typical examples of new windows and external doors. Your drawings should include sections and should show as appropriate glazing bar detail and depth of reveal
 - - the bike store
 - - the bin store
- Detailed hard and soft landscaping scheme to include details of any new or altered boundary treatments and of materials for hard landscaping

Thanks,

Emily

Please note that this advice is given at Officer level only and is without prejudice to the formal decision of the District Council.

Submit your planning application online.
<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk>

Emily Wade Ma MSc
Conservation Officer
Planning Services
Tel: +44 (0)1444 477385
emily.wade@midsussex.gov.uk <http://www.midsussex.gov.uk>



No ID? You can apply for free voter ID
Find out more at
electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID
or call 0800 328 0280