

PLANNING APPLICATION NUMBER:P06/2268

Type of approval sought	Full Planning Permission
Ward	Wordsley
Applicant	Manorset Ltd
Location:	WORDSLEY METHODIST CHURCH, NEW STREET, WORDSLEY, STOURBRIDGE, DY8 5RX
Proposal	PART DEMOLITION AND CONVERSION OF CHURCH TO 6 NO APARTMENTS INCLUDING A SINGLE STOREY REAR EXTENSION
Recommendation Summary:	APPROVE SUBJECT TO A 106 AGREEMENT

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

1. The site comprises a 2/3 storey Methodist Church built in 1892. The main church building has a pitched roof with two turrets either side. The church is constructed using red brick with buff brick quoining defining the turrets. The roof is of slate. The eaves are defined by a dentil detail in red brick. The front elevation of the building is symmetrical with a series of three arched windows being located centrally at both ground and first floor with further windows either side. The windows have stone cills and a projecting arched detail above the lintels. This style is replicated on the other elevations of the building. The building was extended during the 1960's where a number of single storey flat and pitched roof extensions were added. Access to the site is provided to the east of the building with a small tarmac area for parking.
2. The site is located within a predominantly residential area that comprises a mix of type, age and style of properties. Immediately abutting the site's northern and eastern boundaries is a new build development of semi-detached and terraced properties built during the late 1990s. Adjoining the site's western boundary is a detached Victorian dwelling.

PROPOSAL

- It is proposed to demolish a fairly modern extension at the rear of the church and convert the building to six apartments including the erection of a single storey rear extension.

HISTORY

- Relevant planning history:

APPLICATION No.	PROPOSAL	DECISION	DATE
DB/69/5739	Use of room at the church hall for nursery play group.	Approved	10/9/69
DB/72/10859	Continued use of building for a nursery/playschool.	Approved	27/11/72
P06/1785	Part demolition and conversion of church to 8 no. apartments including a 2 storey rear extension.	Withdrawn	31/10/06
P06/1786	Conservation Area Consent for part demolition of church to convert to 8 no. apartments.	Withdrawn	1/11/06

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- The application was advertised by way of neighbour notification letters being sent to the occupiers of forty properties within close proximity to the site and through the display of a site notice and the placing of an advertisement within the local newspaper. The latest date for comments is the 26th January 2007. No letters have been received objecting to the proposals put forward in the Planning Application or Conservation Area Consent application at the time of writing this report. Any letters that are received will be reported as a pre-committee note.

OTHER CONSULTATION

6. The Head of Environmental Protection and The Head of Economic Development raise no objections to the proposed development. English Heritage does not object to the proposals. The West Midlands Fire Service has confirmed that the proposals are satisfactory from their point of view.
7. Group Engineer Development raises a number of concerns with the proposals since visibility splays cannot be met and he is concerned that, given the scheme does not provide sufficient car parking spaces, the development will lead to additional on-street parking which may cause an obstruction to pedestrians and emergency vehicles.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

8.

National Planning Guidance

PPG3 and PPS3 Housing

PPG15 Planning and Historic Environment

Adopted Dudley Unitary Development Plan

Policy DD4 Development in Residential Areas

Policy DD6 Access and Transport Infrastructure

Policy DD7 Planning Obligations

Policy DD8 Provision of Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities

Policy H3 Housing Assessment Criteria

Policy H6 Housing Density

Policy HE4 Conservation Areas

Supplementary Planning Guidance

PGN No. 3 New Housing Development

ASSESSMENT

Principle

9. The proposals would involve the conversion of an existing building into residential use. The site is not identified for any particular use within the Adopted Dudley Unitary Development Plan. The re-use of the building for residential use would bring forward a suitable active use on the site where the use of the building by the church has become unviable.
10. The site lies within the Wordsley Church Conservation Area. The use of the building for residential purposes would help in preserving the character and appearance of the Conservation Area since the proposals would ensure the refurbishment of the building and would secure its long-term use.

Density

11. The site comprises 0.07 hectares resulting in a gross density of 85 dwellings per hectare. PPS3 seeks Local Planning Authorities to ensure that new development makes an efficient use of land by schemes having a minimum density of 30dph. The Council's own draft SPD relating to New Housing Development seeks to define appropriate densities and style of design for new developments having regard to local context and to ensure that schemes are design led in order to preserve local distinctiveness and character.
12. The proposed development does result in a high density. The site is located within a sustainable location being within 100m of Wordsley High Street and situated within a short walk of a strategic road that is well served with regular bus services.
13. The previous proposals that sought to create 8 units on the site were considered to be over-development. The current proposals have reduced the number of units to 6.

The applicant has stated that reducing the units further would make the scheme economically unviable.

14. The proposals would involve the sympathetic conversion of a building within a Conservation Area and the demolition of extensions that detract from the character and appearance of the original building. The proposed extension on the same footprint as those that would be demolished is of a good design and would preserve the character of the Conservation Area.
15. On balance, having regard to the fact that the proposals would involve the sympathetic conversion of the existing building and the erection of an extension on the same footprint as the existing extensions and that the site is located within a sustainable location, in this particular case a high density is justified.

Design

16. The proposals do involve the demolition of the more recent extensions to the building that formerly provided accommodation for the Sunday School. These later additions have little architectural merit. The merits or otherwise of the demolition of these buildings and its impacts on the Conservation Area will be assessed separately in consideration of the application for Conservation Area Consent (P06/2265).
17. In converting the original building into flats all of the original windows would be used and the first floor of the proposed extension would be inserted at an appropriate height in order to retain the original windows to the rear. No new windows are to be inserted within the existing elevations of the church. This would help to ensure the preservation of the integrity of the original building.
18. The proposed single storey rear extension complements the character and appearance of the original building in terms of its architectural detailing. Its scale and massing is appropriate ensuring that it is subservient to the original building.
19. The proposed extension would be higher than the buildings that it would replace. The impacts on the occupiers of adjoining properties in particular nos. 43 and 45a New

Street in terms of loss of light would be negligible. The proposals would involve the creation of a bedroom at first floor with a window that faces the rear gardens of nos. 47-45a New Street. The window would be located 6 metres from the side boundary of 45a. As this window only serves a bedroom and not a habitable room such as a kitchen or lounge, the use of this room would not unduly result in a loss of privacy to the occupiers of 45a New Street or its immediate neighbours. No windows would look directly towards no. 43 New Street.

20. The proposals would provide some sitting out areas for the occupants of the proposed flats running along the two side elevations of the buildings. The area adjoining no. 43 New Street would comprise a 4m x 4m sitting out area with two benches accessed via 1.8 metre walkway from the rear car park. Three benches are proposed on the other side elevation adjoining 45a New Street.

Parking and Access

21. The proposals are deficient in terms of the provision of off street parking and in terms of poor visibility on exit from the proposed parking area. However, the access is existing and has been used by worshippers for many years and given that the proposals would result in the re-use of a building of local distinctiveness within the Conservation Area, it is considered that the overall benefit in retaining the building would outweigh these deficiencies.

Public Open Space and Children's Play Facilities

22. The proposed development would result in the creation of 5 new dwellings. In accordance with Policy DD8 and the Draft SPD on the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision new housing developments of less than 50 dwellings but of 5 or more should provide a financial contribution towards improvements to public open space and children's play areas within the locality. This is to ensure that the proposals do not have an adverse impact on local public open space, sport or recreation facilities through increasing the users of these facilities by the proposed development. The applicant has agreed to enter into a S106 in order to secure an off site contribution.

CONCLUSION

23. The proposals do not provide sufficient car parking spaces for the proposed number of units, the access from the car park does have poor visibility and the proposals do not include a significant private garden area for the occupants. However, the proposals would involve the sympathetic alteration and extension of an unlisted building within a Conservation Area for residential use. The conversion of the building into residential use would preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area through limited alterations to the original building and the addition of a small extension to the rear and the proposals would ensure that the building is retained in active use which would have a positive impact on the character of the Conservation Area.

RECOMMENDATION

24. It is recommended that the application be approved subject to:
- a) The applicant entering into a Section 106 Legal Agreement for a contribution of £6,688.84 to off-site public open space and children's play enhancement
 - b) The following conditions, with delegated powers to the Director of the Urban Environment to make amendments to these as necessary
 - c) In the event that the Section 106 agreement has not been completed within two months of the resolution to grant approval, the application will be refused if appropriate.

Reason for Determination of Planning Permission

The proposals do not provide sufficient car parking spaces for the proposed number of units, the access from the car park does have poor visibility and the proposals do not include a significant private garden area for the occupants. However, the proposals would involve the sympathetic alteration and extension of an unlisted building within a Conservation Area for residential use. The conversion of the building into residential use would preserve the character and appearance of the

Conservation Area through limited alterations to the original building and the addition of a small extension to the rear and the proposals would ensure that the building is retained in active use which would have a positive impact on the character of the Conservation Area.

The decision to grant planning permission has been taken with regard to the policies and proposals in the Dudley Unitary Development Plan set out below and to all relevant material considerations including supplementary planning guidance:

Policy DD4	Development in Residential Areas
Policy DD6	Access and Transport Infrastructure
Policy DD7	Planning Obligations
Policy DD8	Provision of Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities
Policy H3	Housing Assessment Criteria
Policy H6	Housing Density
Policy HE4	Conservation Areas

The above is intended as a summary of the reasons for the grant of planning permission. For further detail on the decision please see the application report.

Conditions and/or reasons:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
2. Prior to the commencement of development details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority of the type, texture and colour of the proposed bricks and roof tiles to be used on the single storey rear extension approved as part of this planning permission. The extension shall be built in accordance with the approved materials.

3. Prior to the commencement of development details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority of the proposed bin store shown on Drawing No. 2412/3c. Following approval of the bin store it shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and retained for the lifetime of the development.
4. No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority a scheme of landscaping, which shall include indications of all existing trees and hedgerows on the land, and details of any to be retained, together with measures for their protection in the course of the development.
5. All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the details of landscaping approved in accordance with condition 4 shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the buildings or the completion of the development whichever is the sooner; and any trees, hedgerows or plants contained in the approved planting scheme which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the local planning authority gives written consent to any variation.
6. The landscaped areas shall be retained in the form shown on the approved plan throughout the life of the development and shall not be used for any other purpose.
7. Prior to the occupation of the dwellings hereby permitted the means of access and parking areas shown on Drawing No. 2412/3c shall be drained, levelled, surfaced and marked out and shall be retained for no other purpose for the life of the development.
8. The windows and doors proposed on the single storey rear extension hereby permitted shall not be made of either PVC-u or anodised aluminium.
9. Prior to the commencement of development detailed plans and elevations of the design and specification of the proposed windows and doors at a scale of no less than 1:50 and in relation to showing architectural details at a scale of no less than 1:20 to be inserted within the rear extension hereby approved shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The windows and doors shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.