

OFFICER: Linda Hayden 01935 462534

APPL.NO: 08/00387/FUL APPLICATION TYPE: Full Application

PARISH: Isle Abbotts WARD: ISLEMOOR

DESCRIPTION: Alterations and conversion of building to form a residential dwelling (GR: 334944/120687)

LOCATION: Former Baptist Chapel, Chapel Road, Isle Abbotts, Taunton, Somerset TA3 6RR

APPLICANT: Mr J Motley & Ms M Temperley

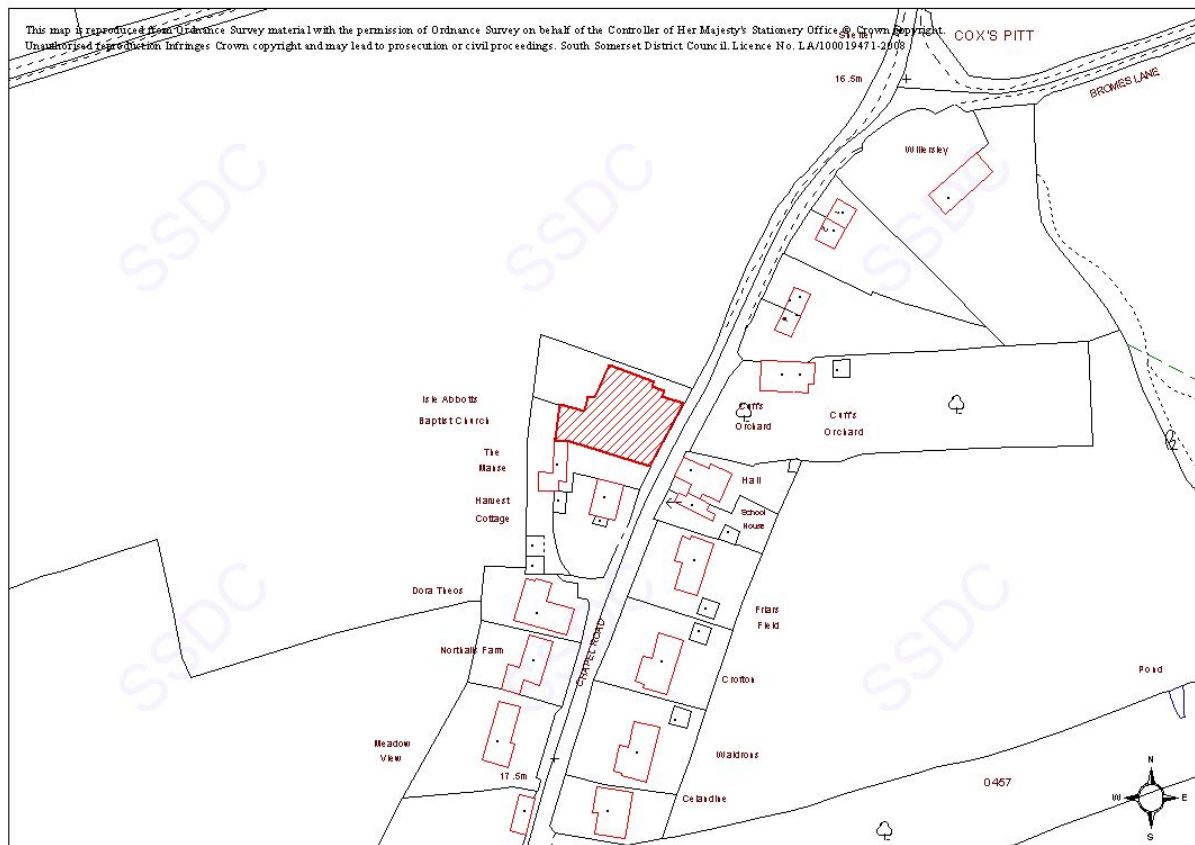
AGENT: John Wratten, The Waggon Shed, Flaxdrayton Farm, South Petherton, Somerset TA13 5LR

DATE ACCEPTED: 12 February 2008

Reason for Referral to Committee

This application is to be considered by the Committee at the request of Cllr Steele who has concerns about the parking implications.

Site Description and Proposal



The application relates to the former Baptist Chapel in Isle Abbotts (restored 1874). The property comprises a stone built front portion that previously formed the main part of the chapel, with a brick and blue lias stone two-storey element at the rear that contains the ancillary servicing rooms (dated 1891). The property occupies a prominent position elevated from the road at the end of a line of detached dwellings. There is no defined development area for Isle Abbotts

The application proposes the conversion of the chapel into a residential property; internally it is proposed to respect the internal height of the main chapel through the use of a mezzanine

floor with rooms in the roof space above. The rear portion would provide the kitchen with bedrooms above. An existing single storey extension at the rear is to be converted into a w.c. and larder.

History

There is no planning history for the property.

Policy

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 repeats the duty imposed under S54A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and requires that decisions must be made in accordance with relevant Development Plan documents unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Relevant Development Plan Documents

Regional Spatial Strategy September 2001:
VIS1 Expressing the Vision
VIS2 Principles for Future Development

Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review 1991-2011:

Policies:-

STR1 - Sustainable Development

STR6 - Development outside towns, rural centres and villages

South Somerset Local Plan (Adopted April 2006):

Policies:-

ST3 - Development outside development areas

ST5 - General Principles of Development

ST6 - The Quality of Development

EC8 - Protected Species

EH7 - The change of use of existing buildings outside defined development areas to residential use

TP7 - Parking Provision in Residential Areas

PPS7 Sustainable development in rural areas (2004).

Consultations

Area Engineer, Technical Services Department has no comments.

Economic Development Officer comments:-

'From an economic perspective, I raise no objection to the loss of this former Chapel to residential. I have no evidence of need for an additional commercial building in the village. In a previous role within this authority, I suggested that an alternative community use for the building may be considered. I understand that the suggested study has been completed and that there has been no interest to use this building by the community. The cost of converting this building to commercial use, speculating an end user, would inhibit a developer becoming involved, particularly as it is a split level site with restricted parking'.

Isle Abbots Parish Council had the following comments regarding the original plans:-

- 1) The idea of digging up graves to allow two parking spaces at the front of the property is insensitive and unacceptable. We were given to understand that a clause in the

sale of the property prohibited the excavation of any of the external land other than for flower beds, as there are many unmarked graves on the site. Apart from that the area required to allow the necessary visual splay would restrict parking in the road for users of the village hall opposite.

- 2) The alteration of the circular vent at the front of the property to a longer window and the addition of dormer windows on the north side of the property are not acceptable as they would change the appearance of the Chapel too much and not be in keeping with the original character and visual aspect of the building. Glazing the circular vent at the front of the property to make a window and putting Velux windows in the roof would be more visually acceptable. Any of the coloured glass in the long windows of the property should be retained and any replacement frames or windows should be wooden, not upvc, to retain the character of this old building. Many of the windows on the south face currently have discreet glass in them, this should be retained to give privacy to the neighbours on this side.
- 3) Any further plans to erect outbuildings or to excavate any of the land where graves are situated would need planning permission due to the limited area of land around the property and the proximity to neighbouring properties.
- 4) Control as to the number of vehicles at the site during works would be needed as the road outside the property could become very congested and could block access to local and service traffic, the emergency services and farm vehicles. The village hall opposite is used by a pre-school playgroup nearly everyday so very stringent safety measures would need to be in place.
- 5) Consideration would need to be made regarding the level of noise created during the alterations. As it will take some time to complete the work there needs to be restrictions as to when work can take place on the property if noise levels could cause a disturbance to neighbours.
- 6) We were advised by members of the public present that the planned extension at the rear of the property extends beyond the boundary of the plot. The plans for this will therefore need to be redrawn.

County Highway Authority comments regarding the amended plans will be reported at the meeting.

Council's Ecologist comments will be reported at the meeting along with any recommended conditions.

Representations

A neighbouring property's comments regarding the original plans are summarised as follows:-

- 1) Queries the landownership as the extension would appear to be built on neighbours land
- 2) Parking places - there is no provision for turning and the road gets congested with parking for the village hall opposite
- 3) Require that the bathroom, bedroom 3 and kitchen window be glazed in obscure glass
- 4) Hope that the existing stained glass windows are required to be retained as they are a real feature and have old diffused glass that offers plenty of privacy to garden and house.

Considerations

Key Issues

Principle of residential conversion

Policy EH7 requires that properties be marketed for a year to assess the possibility of a commercial use before a residential use is considered. In this particular instance, the properties location and lack of parking mean that it is not suited to a commercial use. It is understood that the building was offered to the village for community use but it was not considered that this would be a viable proposition due to the maintenance costs that would be incurred. Both the Economic Development Officer and County Highways have indicated that they would not object to a residential use at the site.

Policy EH7 also requires that the building be structurally sound and not require major alterations. The proposal accords with both of these requirements.

The form, bulk and general design are also considered to be in keeping with the surroundings and this fulfils the additional requirement of policy EH7.

The conversion

Externally there are few changes proposed to the building. On the front elevation an existing circular vent is to be replaced by a new arched window to reflect the existing arched windows. This is considered to be a relatively minor alteration that will not have an undue impact upon the character of the building. The proposed design reflects that of the existing windows and, as such, it is considered acceptable. One window is to be blocked up on the south elevation but this is in the later brick built addition.

The plans have been amended so that the proposed dormer windows have been deleted and replaced with plate glass inserts that sit more comfortably within the existing roof plane.

The small single storey extension at the rear is to be retained and converted to provide a w.c. and larder.

Internally the large open chapel has been respected, accommodation will be provided within the roof space but a new mezzanine floor is proposed at first floor level that will ensure the internal proportions of the building are retained. It is proposed to retain the existing stained glass windows, this could also be ensured through an appropriate condition.

It is considered that the amended plans are now acceptable and represent an appropriate conversion that respects the former use and the historic fabric of the building.

Impact upon neighbouring properties

The proposed use of some of the rooms for residential purposes will have an impact upon the neighbouring property 'The Old Manse'. The chapel sits well forward of 'The Old Manse' and there is a very open side boundary between the properties. All of the side windows of the chapel, therefore, overlook the front garden of 'The Old Manse'. It is considered important in design terms to retain the existing arched windows and their retention could be the subject of a condition. Therefore there should not be any overlooking from these windows as they have diffused glass. With regard to the other windows they would serve a bathroom on the first floor and a kitchen below. It would be possible to impose conditions requiring that these be obscurely glazed.

With regard to the windows at the rear there is the possibility of direct overlooking of the rear garden to 'The Old Manse' and, again, an appropriate condition can be attached that requires the window to be glazed in obscure glass.

Parking

The plans originally proposed that 2 parking spaces be provided on site (as advised by Policy TP7). However, as there were two graves in the proposed location this would have

necessitated the exhumation of human remains (which would require the appropriate order from the Home Office). It was, therefore, recommended that the parking be deleted from the scheme and accordingly the drawings have been amended. Whilst, it is not ideal to have on street parking, especially taking into account the fact that the village hall opposite also doesn't have any parking, it is considered that if the Chapel were to be used as a place of worship this could result in the requirement for considerably more parking than would be generated by a residential use.

The informal response from the County Highway Authority indicates that this would also be their view.

Mitigation for protected species

The application has been amended so that the roof area above the rear extension will be left available for bats that currently occupy the building. Conditions can be attached to ensure that appropriate mitigation is put in place.

Outstanding issues raised by the Parish Council

With regard to construction traffic and noise, it is possible to impose an hours of work condition.

The plans have now been amended to reflect the correct landownership boundaries and the rear extension has been reduced.

Conclusion

The amended plans now represent an acceptable conversion of the chapel. Whilst it is recognised that there are existing parking problems in the area it is considered that the residential conversion of the building will not result in any greater need for parking than would have resulted from the original use. Indeed, any other use of the building would result in a greater need for parking than a residential use. All other issues can be addressed through the use of appropriate conditions.

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE

JUSTIFICATION

The proposed conversion of the chapel to residential use is appropriate within this particular location due to the particular characteristics of the site that make it inappropriate for commercial/community use. The proposal represents a sensitive conversion of the building that will not adversely impact upon neighbouring amenity. Suitable measures will be instituted to mitigate for the presence of protected species. The proposal therefore accords with Policies ST3, ST5, ST6, EC8 and EH7 of the South Somerset Local Plan adopted 2006.

Application Permitted with Conditions

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

Reason: To accord with the provisions of section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

02. The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until particulars of the materials (including the provision of samples where appropriate) to be used for

external walls and roofs have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to accord with policy ST6 of the South Somerset Local Plan adopted 2006

03. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no additional windows, including dormer windows, or other openings (including doors) shall be formed in the building, or other external alteration made without the prior express grant of planning permission.

Reason: In the interests of visual and residential amenity and to accord with policy ST6 of the South Somerset Local Plan adopted 2006

04. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), there shall be no extensions to this building without the prior express grant of planning permission.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to accord with policy ST6 of the South Somerset Local Plan adopted 2006

05. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), the area(s) of rebuilding shall be restricted to that defined on the approved plan(s) and shall not be enlarged without the prior express grant of planning permission. In the event that completion strictly in accordance with such approved plans shall become impracticable for whatever reason, work shall thereupon cease and only be re-commenced if and when an express grant of planning permission shall have been obtained in regard to an amended scheme of works which renders completion of the scheme practicable.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to accord with policy ST6 of the South Somerset Local Plan adopted 2006

06. All new external walls and alterations and making good to existing walls shall be constructed and carried out in matching natural materials (including the matching of pointing and coursing) samples of which shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before any of the development hereby permitted is commenced.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to accord with policy ST6 of the South Somerset Local Plan adopted 2006

07. Prior to the development hereby approved being first brought into use the
a) bathroom window and kitchen window in the south elevation and
b) the first floor bedroom window in the west elevation
shall be fitted with obscure glass and shall be permanently retained and maintained in this fashion thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity and to accord with policy ST6 of the South Somerset Local Plan adopted 2006

08. No work shall be carried out on site unless details of the design, materials and

external finish for all new doors, windows, boarding and openings have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This will include detailed drawings including sections of at least 1:5. Such approved details, once carried out shall not be altered without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To safeguard the character of the building in accordance with policy ST6 of the South Somerset Local Plan (Adopted April 2006).

09. No work shall be carried out on site unless details of the roof lights have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Unless otherwise agreed in writing, the roof lights shall be top hung and flush with the roof covering. Such approved details once carried out shall not be altered without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To safeguard the character of the building in accordance with policy ST6 of the South Somerset Local Plan (Adopted April 2006).

10. No demolition or construction work relating to this permission shall be carried out on any Sunday, Public or Bank Holiday nor at any other time, except between the hours of 08:00 am and 18:00 pm on Mondays to Fridays and between the hours of 08:00 am to 13:00p m on Saturdays.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity and to accord with policy ST6 of the South Somerset Local Plan adopted 2006

11. The existing arched windows (including the glass) shall be retained. Should they need to be replaced no work shall be carried out on site unless details of the design, materials and external finish for all new windows have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This will include detailed drawings including sections of at least 1:5. Such approved details, once carried out shall not be altered without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To safeguard the character of the building and residential amenity in accordance with policy ST6 of the South Somerset Local Plan (Adopted April 2006).

12. Conditions required for mitigation due to the presence of bats will be reported at the meeting.
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