



JOINT AREA COMMITTEES IN SOUTH SOMERSET
Officer Report On Planning Application:
09/01285/FUL

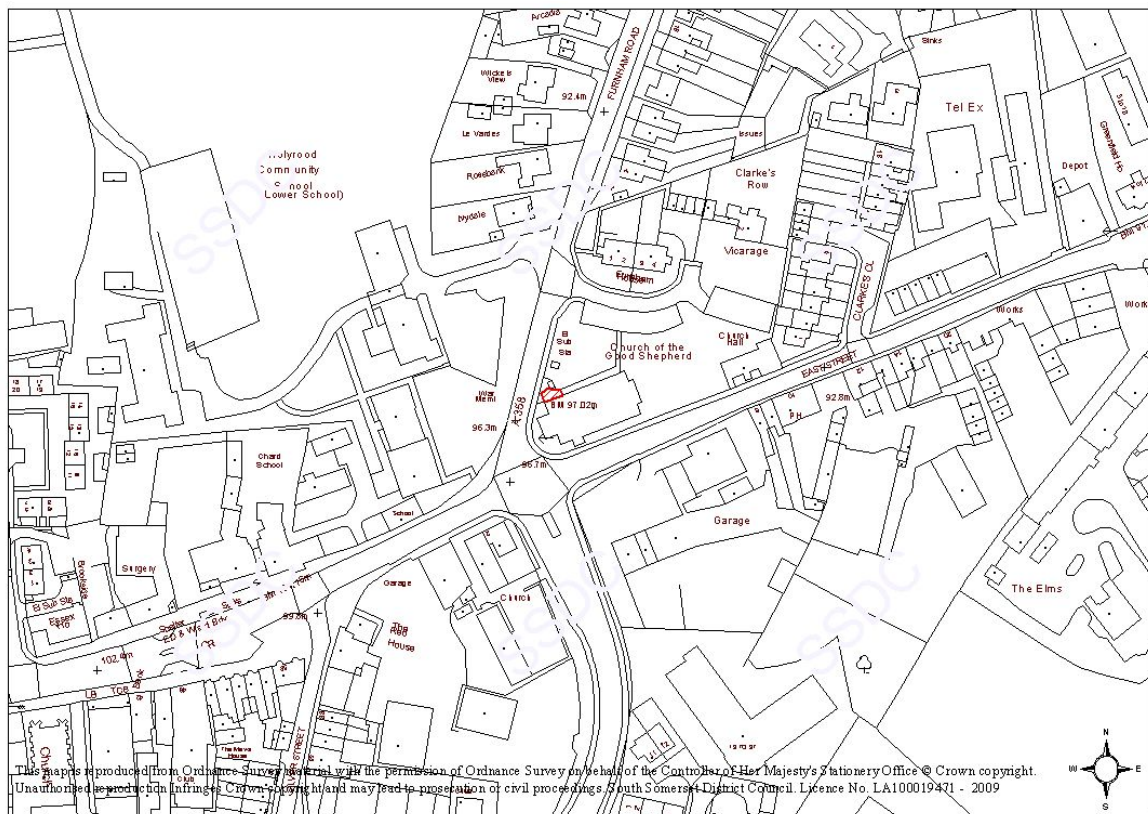


Proposal :	Alterations to provide community meeting rooms within building and the erection of a two storey entrance lobby, stair lift and kitchen (GR 332576/108715)
Site Address:	Church of The Good Shepherd Furnham Road Chard
Parish:	Chard
Ward : (SSDC Member)	CHARD COMBE: Martin Wale (Cllr)
Division (SCC Member)	CHARD NORTH: Jenny Kenton (Cllr)
Recommending Case Officer:	Linda Hayden Tel: 01935 462534 Email: linda.hayden@southsomerset.gov.uk
Target date :	18th June 2009
Applicant :	Father Colin Furness Parochial Church Council
Agent: (no agent if blank)	Mark Richmond Architects 70 The Studio Wellington Road Taunton Somerset TA1 5AP
Application Type :	Minor Other less than 1,000 sq.m or 1ha

REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

This application is put before the Committee, as there has been an objection from the Victorian Society who are a statutory consultee.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL



This is a Grade II listed Anglican Church built in 1873 from local chert rubble with dressings of ham stone with a double Roman tile roof. The Church sits in a very prominent location at the junction of the A358 and A30 within the centre of Chard. The building was only recently listed - September 2007.

The Church is bounded on two sides by the main roads, with the Church Hall to the east and a residential road to the north. There is a small amount of car parking at the rear (north) of the church.

The application proposes the erection of a two storey extension of modern design and materials (it will be encased in copper) to the northern side of the building to provide an entrance lobby and staircase to a new first floor that is to be created within the building. The new first floor would provide new community facilities including a hall for up to 120 people. Underneath the new floor there would be a smaller meeting room, kitchenette and ancillary facilities. A new ridge light is proposed to provide light for the new space. An additional ten car parking spaces are also proposed to the side (north-east) of the church.

The Design and Access Statement advises that the church hall adjacent to the site was no longer usable because of its degenerating structural condition and therefore had to be sold. It has been agreed with the trustees and the Charity Commissioners that the site can be sold and the proceeds be used to build new community facilities. The agents advise that to make the best use of the funds the scheme would be fitted into the extensive envelope of the existing church. The agents consider that the church building is over sized for the congregation and space at the west end will allow for two stories of accommodation to be fitted inside the existing envelope. They state that changes to the street layout mean that the principal approach to the building is now from the north side where car parking is provided. The existing south porch is rarely used as it opens directly onto the A30, the agents advise that the proposed extension will provide both the worship area and the community rooms with a prominent entrance that can be clearly seen from the car parks.

It should be noted that there is no associated listed building consent with this planning application as the property belongs to the Church of England and thus is subject to 'Ecclesiastical Exemption'. All alterations, additions, removals or repairs carried out to the fabric of a church, ornaments or furniture need a licence from the diocesan consistory court; this licence is known as a Faculty.

The property is within the development area of Chard.

HISTORY

The planning history relates to a number of approvals for residential development on land surrounding the church in 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968 and 1969.

In 2007 permission was granted for the conversion and extension of the church hall to provide 2 No. two bed flats and 8 No. one bed flats (07/03362/FUL).

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 decision must be made in accordance with relevant Development Plan Documents unless material considerations indicate otherwise,

Relevant Development Plan Documents

Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the South West (RPG10) (adopted September 2001):
VIS1 Expressing the Vision
VIS2 Principles for Future Development

Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan (adopted April 2000):
STR1 - Sustainable Development
STR2 - Towns
STR4 - Development in Towns
8 - Outstanding Heritage Settlements
9 - The Built Historic Environment
49 - Transport Requirements of New Development

South Somerset Local Plan (adopted April 2006):
ST2 - Development Areas
ST5 - General Principles of Development
ST6 - The Quality of Development
EH3 - Changes of use of Listed Buildings and Alterations to Listed Buildings
EH12 - Areas of High Archaeological potential

Policy-related Material Considerations

Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West (Proposed Changes June 2008):
SD1 - The Ecological Footprint
SD3 - The Environment and Natural Resources
SD4 - Sustainable Communities
Development Policy D - Development at Market Towns
Development Policy E - High Quality Design
ENV5 - Historic Environment
LCF1 - Local Cultural Facilities

PPS's/PPG's
PPG15 Historic Environment

South Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy
Goal 8 - Quality Development

Sections 16 and 66 of the Act require authorities considering applications for planning permission or listed building consent for works that affect a listed building to have special regard to certain matters, including the desirability of preserving the setting of the building. The setting is often an essential part of the building's character, especially if a garden or grounds have been laid out to complement its design or function.

CONSULTATIONS

Chard Town Council:

Recommend approval - however members had reservations regarding the glass roof.

County Highway Authority:

'Whilst the proposal is likely to result in an increase in the number of vehicular movements at this point the proposal has provided an acceptable level of additional parking within the site and as such the Highway Authority are satisfied that the proposal is unlikely to encourage the parking of vehicles on the highway at this point.

It is noted that the proposed footway shown on the submitted plan has a width of 1.2m. The Highway Authority would recommend that this footway be widened to 2.0m so as to enable two wheelchair users to comfortably pass and avoid conflict with pedestrians at this point.

As a result, I would recommend that an amended plan be submitted incorporating the detail as described above. If such a plan were to be submitted then the Highway Authority would not raise an objection to the proposal.'

Officer Note: The plans have been amended in accordance with the request of the County Highway Authority.

The Conservation Officer comments:

'You will be aware that this Church has been recently listed. As it will remain a building whose primary purpose is worship, it is subject to the Ecclesiastical Exemption Order. This means that whilst Planning Permission is required for the external work, the Local Planning Authority will not deal with an application for listed building consent. The Chancellor of the Diocese of Bath and Wells will deal with this under the guidance of the Diocesan Advisory Committee. Therefore, the internal changes are not before the Council at this time, but we should consider the impact on the listed building of the external works, as well as normal planning issues.

Section 66 of the Act requires authorities considering applications for planning permission for works that affect a listed building to have special regard to certain matters, including the desirability of preserving the setting of the building.

You will recall that I initially had reservations about this proposal, and that we met the agent with the Conservation Manager (Adron Duckworth). The agent explained the underlying direction of the congregation, and how this differed from the other Anglican Church in the parish.

After lengthy discussion over the design principles and approaches, Adron felt that the proposal was acceptable, but remained concerned about the appropriate nature of copper as an external finish. The agent explained that they were sure that it would be very difficult to remove/steal, but we were not convinced that it could not be easily defaced by scratching.'

A number of conditions have been recommended should permission be granted.

Environmental Protection:

No observations.

Area Engineer, Technical Services Department:

No comments.

Development Control Archaeologist at Somerset County Council:

Advises that there are limited or no archaeological implications to the proposal and they therefore have no objections.

English Heritage:

Do not consider that it is necessary for this application to be notified to English Heritage.

The Victorian Society:

'We wish to register our objection.

The approach to altering a listed building should be one of minimal intervention. This scheme proposes extensive changes to the church, which would do harm to its special interest.

The Statement of Significance describes the characteristics of the church that make it a grade II-listed building. Amongst those mentioned are the rose window in the west end gable and 'wide and inclusive' internal space. The proposed division of the interior would not enhance the character of the church and would shorten the length of the nave, obliterating views to the attractive west elevation and the light that enters its windows.

The need for these harmful proposals is not convincing. No evidence of an existing need for a community hall for 120 people, two kitchens and three WCs is provided. The proposals seem far too speculative to justify the extensive damage to the character of this recently listed building. The associated church hall is not listed and is still owned by the church, it would be worth knowing whether the parish had looked at options for possibly partitioning the interior of the church hall and letting it out to generate funds. Focusing on improving the existing facilities on the site would involve less intervention to the listed church and would be more likely to be granted permission.

The west end of the church could feasibly accommodate kitchen and WC units, if designed in sympathy with the rest of the interior. However the need for a large community space is unjustified and the current design for it far too invasive. The north side of the church is the most appropriate place for a small extension but the need for it has not been sufficiently demonstrated.'

REPRESENTATIONS

None received.

CONSIDERATIONS

It is considered that the main planning considerations with regard to this proposed development are:

- 1) Proposed design of the extension
- 2) Impact upon setting of listed building
- 3) Comments of the Victorian Society

It must be pointed out at the outset that as set out above this application cannot consider the internal alterations that are proposed in the building, these do not require planning permission. The internal alterations will be the subject of a separate application that will be dealt with under the Ecclesiastical Exemption as detailed above.

- 1) Proposed design of the extension

The architects have decided that in this particular instance a modern addition would be the best solution to extending the church. The addition will be located to the northern side of the church, which is on the less prominent side of the building. The addition will be clad in unpatinated copper sheet that will complement the existing materials. Concern has been expressed regarding the durability of the copper sheet but the architect is convinced that the material is suitable. Research has shown that the material has been used in a variety of different buildings from schools to hospital buildings and is known to be extremely durable, furthermore it is 100% recyclable.

It is considered that whilst this is a modern addition it will complement the Church both in terms of its size, design and materials. The proposed extension is of a relatively small scale and is of a simple form that will not compete with the ornate architectural details on the church. As previously stated the copper cladding is of a relatively dark colour that will complement the existing chert and tiled building.

A ridge light is also proposed that will provide additional light to the church interior. It is considered that the ridge light will add an element of interest to the roof, its design reflects the existing plane of the roof and as such will not disrupt the appearance of the existing roof.

- 2) Impact upon the setting of the listed building

PPG 15 'Historic Environment' advises that:-

'Modern extensions should not dominate the existing building in either scale, material or situation. There will always be some historic buildings where any extensions would be

damaging and should not be permitted. Successful extensions require the application of an intimate knowledge of the building type that is being extended together with a sensitive handling of scale and detail.'

In this case, it is considered that the extension is of an appropriate size that will not dominate the existing very large building. The design is considered to be an appropriate response to the sensitive nature of the site and will not compete with the dominant architecture of the existing church. The proposed extension incorporates a plinth to be constructed in stone to match the existing building. This will ensure that the new extension is properly related to the existing church and the two will 'tie' together.

It is considered that a modern approach is preferable in this instance, it will add an element of interest and redirect users to the main entrance but at the same time it will not overwhelm the existing building. As such, the proposal will not adversely impact upon the setting of this listed building.

3) Comments of the Victorian Society

The majority of the comments from the Victorian Society relate to the internal alterations to the building that are not to be considered under this planning application. The Victorian Society also mentions the need for the alterations and again this is not an issue that could be used to refuse planning permission. From their statement the Victorian Society do not object to an extension to the northern side of the Church but are more concerned about the internal alterations. As such, it is not considered that this application should be refused because of the comments of the Victorian Society.

It is concluded that the proposed scheme is acceptable, whilst proposing a modern extension this is considered to be the most appropriate solution in this instance. The extension is of modest proportions and will not compete with the dominant architecture of the church.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve.

The proposal by reason of its size, scale, design, materials and position is considered to respect the historic and architectural interests of the building and is in accordance with policy 9 of the Joint Structure Plan Review, EH3 of the South Somerset Local Plan, and the provisions of PPG 15.

SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING:

1. 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.

2. The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the submitted plans and specifications as amended by applicant's e-mail of 27 July 2009 and revised drawing 506478/P/02/D both received 27 July 2009.

Reason: To avoid doubt as to the development authorised as the submitted proposal has been amended in accordance with Policy 49 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review 1991-2011.

3. No work shall be carried out on site unless 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. Such particulars will include the detailed finish (rough sawn, hand tooled, etc.) Slate hooks shall not be used.

Reason: in the interests of the special architectural and historic interests of the listed building and in accordance with policy EH3 of the South Somerset Local Plan adopted 2006.

4. 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 listed building in accordance with policy EH3 of the South Somerset Local Plan (Adopted April 2006).

5. No work shall be carried out on site unless design details of all roof eaves, verges and abutments, including detail drawings at a scale of 1:5, and details of all new guttering, down pipes, other rainwater goods, and external plumbing have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such details once carried out shall not be altered without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic interests of the listed building and in accordance with policy EH3 of the South Somerset Local Plan adopted 2006.

6. No work shall be carried out on site unless details of the ridge light has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Unless otherwise agreed in writing, the ridge light shall be installed 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: In the interests of the special architectural and historic interests of the listed building and in accordance with policy EH3 of the South Somerset Local Plan adopted 2006.

7. No work shall be carried out on site unless the method and detail of the blocking up of existing opening and the new proposed opening in the boundary wall has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such approved details once carried out shall not be altered without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic interests of the listed building and in accordance with policy EH3 of the South Somerset Local Plan adopted 2006.

8. No other part of the development hereby permitted shall be commenced until the car park has been provided and its area has been properly drained, consolidated and surfaced in a material to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such approved details once carried out shall not be altered without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic interests of the listed building and in accordance with policy EH3 of the South Somerset Local Plan adopted 2006.

9. No work shall be carried out on site unless full details the new natural stonework plinth, including the materials, coursing, bonding, mortar profile, colour, and texture along with a written detail of the mortar mix, have been provided in writing; this shall be supported with a sample panel to be made available on site and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The work shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed details,

and the sample panel shall remain available for inspection throughout the duration of the work.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic interests of the listed building and in accordance with policy EH3 of the South Somerset Local Plan adopted 2006.

10. No work shall be carried out on site unless full details of the junction of the new extension with the existing building to include details of the valley have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such approved details once carried out shall not be altered without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic interests of the listed building and in accordance with policy EH3 of the South Somerset Local Plan adopted 2006.