

No.8	APPLICATION NO.	2019/0121/FUL
	LOCATION	St Elizabeths Parish Centre 10 Hall Road Scarisbrick Ormskirk Lancashire L40 9QE
	PROPOSAL	Proposed conversion of the former / vacant parish centre into 4 apartments, with associated external alterations and demolition of outbuildings
	APPLICANT	Father Godric n/a
	WARD	Scarisbrick
	PARISH	Scarisbrick
	TARGET DATE	5th November 2019

1.0 REFERRAL/DEFERRAL

- 1.1 This application was to be determined under the Council's delegation scheme, however, Councillor Marshall has requested it be referred to Committee to consider whether the development represents over intensification of the site and the impact on highway safety.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 This is a detailed application for the conversion of the former / vacant parish centre to 4 apartments. The proposed use, layout and design is considered to be acceptable. The development will not have a detrimental impact on highway safety and adequate parking has been provided. It is also considered that the development would not have an impact upon the character of the Conservation Area or setting of the adjacent Listed Building. Subject to conditions I am satisfied that the proposal complies with the relevant policies of the Local Plan.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE subject to conditions.

4.0 THE SITE

- 4.1 The application site relates to the vacant Parish Centre for St Elizabeth's Church which is located to the south of Hall Road and is accessed via Clyffes Farm Close. The building was previously used as a privately run children's centre. The building is part of the nearby church and is operated and maintained by the church. The application site is located within a small rural village (settlement boundary) of Scarisbrick and also within the Scarisbrick Park Conservation Area. The application site is also an important building in the setting to two Grade II Listed Buildings which are adjacent to the site at St Elizabeth's RC Church and 1 Bescar Brow Lane.

5.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 5.1 This application seeks planning permission to convert the vacant Parish Centre for St Elizabeths Church into four apartments. Two units will comprise of three bedrooms and two units will comprise of two bedrooms. Parking will be provided within an existing hard surfaced courtyard.
- 5.2 It is worth noting that since first submission of the scheme the residential units proposed at this site have been reduced from 5 to 4.

6.0 PREVIOUS RELEVANT DECISIONS

- 6.1 2018/0651/FUL - Conversion of the vacant Parish Centre for St Elizabeth's Church into five two and three bedroom flats. Refused 02.11.2018.

7.0 CONSULTEE RESPONSES

- 7.1 LCC Highway Authority (16/10/2019) – No objections recommends planning conditions.
- 7.2 Environmental Health (24/04/2019) – The application site is situated extremely close to the road. Despite being classified as a 'B' road it is very busy, with significant agricultural, commercial and heavy vehicle use. The sharp corner, nearby junction and narrowness of the road also contribute to there being a considerable amount of road traffic noise. Recommends planning conditions in relation to noise survey and electric charging points.

8.0 OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

- 8.1 West Lancashire Conservation Area Panel (28/03/2019) - No objections in principle. Panel remain concerned over the proposed treatment of the windows and in particular the window on the western gable end (see comments made on the previous application 2018/0651/FUL dated 25 October 2018). Panel wish to see details of the window treatment to ensure the appearance of the building is not harmed by the proposed conversion.

- 8.2 Scarisbrick Parish Council
(05/04/2019) – No objections.
(11/10/2019) - Object to this application. In principle the Council is in favour of developing this building, however, the applicant has not adequately addressed the parking of occupant's vehicles, bin storage or flooding issues within the application. Parking and obstruction of the pavements are particular issues regularly highlighted to the Parish Council, the applicant should ensure that this proposal does not create more issues.

- 8.3 Four neighbour representations have been received, commenting:

Over intensification of the use of the building

Lack of amenity space

Access congestion

Health and safety

Bin store for 5 bins is inadequate – each property will require 3 wheelie bins as a minimum, which will compromise amenity space.

No provision of garage space

For the purposes of this application the proposed conversion should be termed as houses and not apartments

Parking concerns

Floor layout plans do not include details of existing cellar area

No pre application neighbour consultation

Over intensification of the use as residential may lead to anti-social behaviour, trespass and security issues in the neighbourhood

9.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 9.1 Planning Statement (Feb 2019)
- 9.2 Heritage Statement
- 9.3 Design and Access Statement (May 2018)

9.4 Preliminary Ecological Assessment (September 2018)

10.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

10.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) and the West Lancashire Local Plan (WLLP) provide the policy framework against which the development proposals will be assessed. The application site is located within a small rural village (settlement boundary) as designated in the West Lancashire Local Plan Proposal Map. The following policies are therefore relevant:

10.2 West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 DPD

Policy SP1- A sustainable development framework for West Lancashire

Policy RS1 – Residential development

Policy GN1 – Settlement Boundaries

Policy GN3 – Criteria for Sustainable Development

Policy EN2 – Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire's Natural Environment

Policy IF2 – Enhancing Sustainable Transport Choice

Policy EN2- Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire's Natural Environment

Policy EN4 – Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire's Cultural and Heritage Assets

IF3 – Service Accessibility and Infrastructure for Growth

Supplementary Planning Document – Design Guide (January 2008)

11.0 OBSERVATIONS OF DIRECTOR OF PLACE AND COMMUNITY

Assessment

11.1 The main areas for consideration in determining an application are:

Principle of Development

Design and appearance of the development (including impact upon Conservation Area and setting of adjacent Listed Buildings)

Highways

Impact upon neighbouring properties

Drainage

Trees and biodiversity

Principle of Development

Policy RS1 - Residential Development

11.2 The site is located within a small rural village as designed in the WLLP. Policy SP1 states that *development in the Small Rural Villages will only be permitted where it involves like for like redevelopment of an existing property, the appropriate re-use of an existing building or infill development (in line with Policy RS1).*

11.3 Within small rural villages, Policy RS1 allows *the appropriate re-use of an existing building.*

11.4 As the development is for the conversion of the existing building to residential use, which is an appropriate use within settlement areas, I consider that the principle of the proposed use is acceptable. As the site is protected by other policies, in considering the principle of the development, as the building has a community use being a Parish Centre for the Church, Policy IF3 is also relevant.

Policy IF3 'Service Accessibility and Infrastructure for Growth'

- 11.5 In terms of the loss of a community facility, Policy IF3 'Service Accessibility and Infrastructure for Growth' of the WLLP states that the loss of any community facility should be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that the facility is no longer needed or can be relocated elsewhere in a location that is equally accessible to the community.
- 11.6 One of the reasons for the refusal of planning application 2018/0651/FUL was that "The proposed development conflicts with Policy IF3 of the West Lancashire Local Plan in that it has not been demonstrated that the community facility is no longer needed or can be relocated elsewhere in a location that is equally accessible by the community".
- 11.7 A planning statement has been provided with the current planning application. It is advised that the building has not performed a community function since July 2015 when the use of the building terminated.
- 11.8 The building is in a poor state of repair and is not fit for purpose for community uses and it is estimated that the repair works to the premises would cost at least £50,000. It is advised that the Parish do not have the level of finance and even if it did – it would not be a viable commercial judgement to spend that on repairs to accommodate community users.
- 11.9 It is confirmed that the previous users of the building, a nursery and taekwondo club, on closure of the building, re-located to St Marys Primary School which is located on Hall Road, Scarisbrick. It is advised that moving these facilities to the school has also helped to sustain the village school.
- 11.10 It is also advised that it is the intention to spend part of the proceeds of the sale of the site on the refurbishment and extension of the presbytery to deliver a new community meeting venue.
- 11.11 Therefore, from the information provided, I consider that it has been demonstrated that the community facilities that were previously provided within the Parish Centre have been relocated to a location that is equally accessible to the community. The development therefore complies with IF3 of the WLLP.

Design and appearance of the development (including impact upon Conservation Area and setting of adjacent Listed Buildings)

- 11.12 In terms of design and the external appearance of the development, Policy GN3 of the WLLP together with the Council's SPD Design Guide states that new development should be of a scale, mass and built form, which responds to the characteristics of the site and its surroundings. Care should be taken to ensure that buildings do not disrupt the visual amenities of the street scene because of their height, scale or roofline.
- 11.13 LPA's should in coming to decisions have "special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting" as in section 66(1) and the need to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area under section 72. Recent High Court judgements identify the need to give considerable weight and importance to the duty imposed and to the presumption in favour of the desirability of the preservation of heritage assets, including their setting.
- 11.14 One of the reasons for the refusal of planning application 2018/0651/FUL was that "*By virtue of the limited information provided the applicant has not demonstrated that the*

development would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Scarisbrick Park Conservation Area or the setting of no. 1 Bescar Brow Lane – a grade II Listed Building and therefore conflicts with the requirements of Policies GN3 and EN4 of the West Lancashire Local Plan".

- 11.15 The current building is located on a prominent location with the north elevation fronting onto Hall Road. The L-shaped linked buildings are dated 1888 and are identified as being important unlisted buildings in the Scarisbrick Park Conservation Area Appraisal 2001. The building is also within the setting of Listed Buildings, at 1 Bescar Brow Lane of St Elizabeths RC Church.
- 11.16 Additional information and amendments have been made to the scheme since refusal notice 2018/0651/FUL.
- 11.17 In terms of the proposed roof lights, these have been reduced significantly, particularly on the northern side (front elevation) and are now predominately located on the courtyard side, which, at the rear of the property, is considered not to play a major role in the appearance of the building within the street scene. All proposed roof lights will be of conservation style and new doors and windows will be painted timber.
- 11.18 In terms of boundary treatment this has been confirmed that the existing brick dwarf wall with existing cast iron railing will be retained to the frontage. The dwarf wall and cast iron railing will be extended to either side of the frontage to match that of the existing which is acceptable.
- 11.19 Details of the treatment of the western gothic style window have been provided, to show how the mezzanine floor will be inserted across the window. These are acceptable and it is considered that the proposed conversion works will not have a significant impact on the appearance of the building.
- 11.20 Subject to appropriate planning conditions, in relation to materials and the position of bathroom vents, it is considered that the development would not result to any harm to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area or the setting of the adjacent Listed Building. The development is considered to comply with Policy EN4 of the WLLP.
- 11.21 In terms of amenity space, the Councils Design Guide is relevant and states that the minimum rear garden depth will generally be 10m unless the particular merits of the case, in terms of the character of the setting, warrant a reduction in this requirement. Due to initial Officer concerns in terms of amenity space to each unit, the number of units proposed has been reduced from 5 to 4 and a re-configuration of the amenity areas has now taken place.
- 11.22 Although the garden areas to each of the properties falls short of the 10m depth recommended by the SPD Design Guide, I consider the external amenity space to be provided is acceptable. The SPD indicates that the character of the setting can warrant a reduction in this requirement. The building plays a significant role in the setting of the adjacent listed building and it is important that it is brought back into viable use and in this context I consider the level of amenity space to be provided is acceptable.
- 11.23 A wheelie bin provision has been made on the site for storage for 14 bins, which is sufficient for the properties proposed.
- 11.24 In terms of any impact upon the adjacent Listed Buildings, I feel the proposed re-use retains the visual and historic relationship and will not harm the setting of Grade 2 St Elizabeth's Church or adjacent listed cottage, 1 Bescar Brow Lane and the proposal

therefore complies with Policy EN4 in the Local Plan, the NPPF and the Council's statutory duty..

Highways

- 11.25 The site is accessed by an existing vehicular access off Clyffes Farm Close which is off Hall Road. Clyffes Farm Close is an unclassified road which has been categorised as a local access road with a 30mph speed limit fronting the site.
- 11.26 The proposal is for 2 No 2 bedroom flats and 2 No 3 bedroom flats with car parking for 8 cars including provision for 1 disabled parking space. Based on the recommended parking provision within the West Lancashire Local Plan as contained within Policy IF2, I consider that adequate car parking has been provided. The Highway Authority have been consulted and raised no objection to the development and consider that the proposed development should have a negligible impact on highway capacity and highway safety within the immediate vicinity of the site.

Impact upon neighbouring properties

- 11.27 Policy GN3 of the West Lancashire Local Plan (2012-2027) DPD allows development provided it retains or creates reasonable levels of privacy, amenity and sufficient garden/outdoor space for occupiers of the neighbouring and proposed properties.
- 11.28 One of the reasons for the refusal of planning application 2018/0651/FUL was that the *"The proposed development conflicts with Policy GN3 of the West Lancashire Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Document 'Design Guide' (Jan 2008) in that the development due to the location of first floor roof lights would result in overlooking to the rear garden area of no. 1 Bescar Brow Lane to the significant detriment of the residential amenity of occupiers of that property"*.
- 11.29 No. 1 Bescar Brow Lane lies to the west of the application site. Further to the refusal notice, the number of rooflights on the western side elevation have been reduced, with just one rooflight proposed to the most southern plot. It is confirmed that this rooflight will be located closer to the ridge at a minimum of 2.2m above the floor level of the room in which is it installed to prevent any overlooking to the garden area of no.1 Bescar Lane.
- 11.30 To the south west of the site is no.2a Clyffes Farm Close. I note that in the unit which would directly face no.2a to the southern elevation, a window exists which would serve a ground floor living room and first floor bathroom. The plans indicate that this window will be obscurely glazed at first floor level to prevent any overlooking implications to the occupants of no.2a.
- 11.31 Policy GN3 of the WLLP also seeks to protect the amenity of proposed properties. The application site is situated extremely close to the road. Despite being classified as a 'B' road it is very busy, with significant agricultural, commercial and heavy vehicle use. The sharp corner, nearby junction and narrowness of the road also contribute to there being a considerable amount of road traffic noise. Therefore to protect the amenity of the proposed occupiers of the properties a planning condition is recommended to require the submission of a noise survey and any related mitigation.

Drainage

- 11.32 It is indicated that foul sewage and surface water is to be disposed of via mains drainage within the submitted planning application form. Full drainage details have not been submitted with the application. However there is a net reduction in hardsurfacing as a

result of the development. A planning condition is recommended which would require the developer to submit full details of both foul and surface water drainage for approval prior to the commencement of development.

Trees and Biodiversity

11.33 There are existing trees within the site which are shown for retention on the submitted plans. A condition is recommended to ensure that these trees are protected during construction.

11.34 The scheme represents net gains for biodiversity as additional areas of the site are to be grassed and landscaped. Details of the proposed landscaping scheme will be required by condition. I am therefore satisfied that the proposed development complies with policy EN2 in the Local Plan.

12.0 CONCLUSION

12.1 The principle of the proposed development is acceptable and the scheme complies with the relevant policies in the Local Plan, the NPPF and the Council's statutory duty under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

13.0 RECOMMENDATION

13.1 That planning permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions and reasons:

Condition(s)

1. The development must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.
2. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with details shown on the following plans:-
Plan reference PA-AX-72-001; A132; A139; A118 and A-AX-76-002 received by the Local Planning Authority on 30/10/2019.
3. No development shall take place until a scheme for the separate foul and surface water drainage of the site, including any necessary attenuation measures, has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented in full prior to first occupation of the building/s and maintained as such at all times for the duration of the development.
4. Prior to construction of any dwelling a scheme for the provision of electric vehicle charging points throughout the development and timetable for implementation shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No dwelling shall be occupied until an electric vehicle charging point has been installed in accordance with the agreed details.
5. The proposed hardstanding areas shall be made of a porous materials or provision shall be made to direct run off water from the hard surface to a permeable or porous area or surface within the site boundaries.
6. Within three months of commencement of development a landscaping scheme shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The landscaping scheme shall show the location, branch spread, and species of all existing trees and hedges; the location, species and number of all proposed trees, shrubs and hedges; and the location of all existing and proposed grassed and hard surfaced areas. Trees and shrubs planted shall comply with BS. 3936(Specification of Nursery Stock) and shall be planted in accordance with BS. 4428 (General Landscape Operations). Within a period of 9 months from the date when any part of the development is brought into use the approved landscaping scheme shall be carried out. All planting shall be maintained and dead or

dying material shall be replaced for a period of seven years from the agreed date of planting.

7. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development and General Development Procedure) Orders 1995 or any subsequent Orders or statutory provision re-enacting the provisions of these Orders no window or rooflight shall be added to the property until details of the positioning, size and design have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
8. Unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority all windows and doors shall be painted timber; rainwater goods shall be cast iron or aluminium ogee; and, rooflights shall be 'conservation grade' flush fitting rooflights.
9. No vents shall be added to the roof of the building until details of the positioning, size and design have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
10. Prior to the commencement of the use of the development hereby approved any part of the bathroom first floor window on the southern elevation below a height of 1.7m above the floor of the room in which the window is installed, shall be fitted with obscure glazing (Pilkington level 3 or equivalent) and shall be non opening and shall remain so fitted at all times thereafter for the duration of the development.
11. No boundary treatment shall be erected on the site until details of the positioning, size and design have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
12. The car parking spaces and manoeuvring areas shall be marked out in accordance with the approved plan, before the use of the premises hereby permitted becomes operative.
13. No part of the development hereby approved shall commence until a scheme for the construction of the new site access (and reinstatement of existing radius access) has been submitted to, and approved by, the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority as part of an appropriate legal agreement, under the Highways Act 1980. The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to first occupation of the building.
14. Prior to commencement of development, a noise assessment shall be carried out to demonstrate that noise from the B5242 will not adversely affect the occupiers of the proposed residential development. The scheme should be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall include any details of noise mitigation measures. All works which form part of the scheme shall be completed before the dwellings are occupied and retained thereafter.
15. The existing trees shall be retained and before site works commence they shall be protected with stout fencing constructed to BS5837:2012, to contain the branch spread of the trees. Such fencing shall remain and be adequately maintained for the duration of the development operations. Within this fencing no development operations may take place including the storage or dumping of materials or plant, the lighting of fires, the siting of temporary huts or the raising or lowering of ground levels. All dead or damaged existing trees specified for retention shall be replaced with trees of such size and species approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason(s)

1. Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
2. For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure compliance with the provisions of Policy GN3 in the adopted West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan Document.
3. To ensure that the site is properly drained in the interest of local amenity and that the development, therefore, complies with the provisions of Policies GN3 & IF3 in the adopted West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan Document.
4. In the interests of sustainability and air quality in accordance with Policy GN3 in the West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan Document.
5. To ensure that the site is properly drained in the interest of local amenity and that the development, therefore, complies with the provisions of Policies GN3 & IF3 in the adopted West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan Document.

6. To assimilate the proposed development into its surroundings and to ensure that the development complies with the provisions of Policy EN2 in the adopted West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan Document.
7. The character and location of the building such that the Local Planning Authority wish to exercise maximum control over future development in order to comply with the provisions of Policies GN3 and EN4 in the adopted West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan Document.
8. The character and location of the building is such that the Local Planning Authority wish to exercise maximum control over future development in order to comply with the provisions of Policies GN3 and EN4 in the adopted West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan Document.
9. The character and location of the building is such that the Local Planning Authority wish to exercise maximum control over future development in order to comply with the provisions of Policies GN3 and EN4 in the adopted West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan Document.
10. To protect the privacy of adjacent residential properties and so comply with the provisions of Policy GN3 in the adopted West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan Document.
11. The character and location of the site is such that the Local Planning Authority wish to exercise maximum control over future development in order to comply with the provisions of Policies GN3 and EN4 in the adopted West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan Document.
12. To allow for the effective use of parking areas and to ensure that the development complies with the provisions of Policies GN3 & IF2 in the adopted West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan Document.
13. In order to satisfy the Local Planning Authority and Highway Authority that the final details of the highway scheme/works are acceptable before work commences on site.
14. To protect the amenity of the future occupiers of the residential properties and so comply with the provisions of Policy GN3 in the adopted West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan Document.
15. To protect the trees and shrubs and thereby retain the character of the site and the area and to ensure that the development complies with the provisions of Policies GN3 & EN2 in the adopted West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan Document.

Reason for Approval

1. The Local Planning Authority has considered the proposed development in the context of the Development Plan including, in particular, the following Policies in the adopted West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan Document:
Policy SP1- A sustainable development framework for West Lancashire
Policy RS1 – Residential development
Policy GN1 – Settlement Boundaries
Policy GN3 – Criteria for Sustainable Development
Policy EN2 – Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire’s Natural Environment
Policy IF2 – Enhancing Sustainable Transport Choice
Policy EN4 – Preserving and Enhancing West Lancshires Cultural and Heritage Assets
Policy IF3 – Service Accessibility and Infrastructure for Growth
together with Supplementary Planning Guidance and all relevant material considerations. The Local Planning Authority considers that the proposal complies with the relevant Policy criteria and is acceptable in the context of all relevant material considerations as set out in the Officer's Report. This report can be viewed or a copy provided on request to the Local Planning Authority.