

**Application Number** 19/00732/FUL

<b>Proposal</b>	Conversion of vacant former Independent Methodist Church into 12no. self-contained apartments comprising 7no. 1-bed units & 5no. 2-bed units
<b>Site</b>	Independent Methodist Church, Wellington Road, Ashton-Under-Lyne.
<b>Applicant</b>	Mr Taro Nabetani
<b>Recommendation</b>	Approve subject to conditions
<b>Reason for report</b>	A Speakers Panel decision is required because the application constitutes a major development.

## **1.0 APPLICATION DESCRIPTION**

- 1.1 The application seeks full planning permission to convert the currently-vacant church to 12 self-contained flats. Seven of the flats would be 1-bedroom and five would be 2-bedroom.
- 1.2 Access and egress to the building would remain from an existing doorway in the front of the building in to a shared lobby from where staircases would rise to the upper floors.
- 1.3 The main front elevation to Wellington Road would be retained apart from the replacement of timber window frames with new dark grey aluminium, replicating the same window style.
- 1.4 The building was originally 2-storey. The proposal includes the existing ground floor level being retained and the first-floor being removed and replaced with 3 new storeys, including utilising the roof space. The introduction of the new first and second floors would not coincide with the existing main windows at ground and first floor levels to the side elevations. The proposal then includes the removal of areas of brickwork between the ground and first floor windows and the introduction of new, full-height windows from existing ground floor sill level up to the existing first floor window head heights. The new, dark grey aluminium windows would be sub-divided with darkened glass being used to obscure floorplates at the new floor levels. Where possible, all window frames would be recessed into the existing openings. No other alterations are proposed to the side elevations.
- 1.5 At the rear, an existing, single-storey section of the building would include a bedroom to one of the flats and a patio area and, on either side of these, enclosed bin and cycle storage areas.
- 1.6 Two flats would be accommodated in the roofspace with rooflights being introduced along both roof slopes.

## **2.0 SITE & SURROUNDINGS**

- 2.1 Founded in 1877, the Independent Methodist Church is situated on the northern side of Wellington Road with the gable frontage facing across the road towards the bus station in Ashton town centre. The Church is detached from its neighbours and is set back from the footway by approximately 1m behind an approximately 0.6m high brick wall. Gated passageways on both sides separate the Church from the gable of a 2-storey, end-terrace house, now converted to flats, to the west and a single-storey building used as a veterinary practice to the east. The passageway on the western side of the Church opens into a yard at the rear, which on the eastern side is occupied by a single-storey section of the building that adjoins rear yards of terraced houses behind in West Street.

- 2.2 Currently containing 2 storeys, the building rises to a height of approximately 9.5m at the eaves and 14m at the ridge of the roof.
- 2.3 The surroundings are typical of the town centre location.

### **3.0 PLANNING HISTORY**

- 3.1 Granted in October 2017, full planning permission (ref. 17/00523/FUL) allows for the change of use and conversion of the redundant/vacant former Independent Methodist Church into 8no. self-contained apartments, comprising 3no. 1-bed units & 5no. 2-bed units.

### **4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES**

- 4.1 **Tameside Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Allocation**  
Unallocated within the town centre boundary.

#### **4.2 Part 1 Policies**

- 1.3: Creating a Cleaner and Greener Environment.
- 1.4: Providing More Choice and Quality Homes.
- 1.5: Following the Principles of Sustainable Development
- 1.12: Ensuring an Accessible, Safe and Healthy Environment
- 1.13: Meeting Obligations on Minerals, Waste and Energy.

#### **4.3 Part 2 Policies**

- H2: Unallocated Sites.
- H4: Type, Size and Affordability of Dwellings.
- H7: Mixed Use and Density.
- H10: Detailed Design of Housing Developments.
- T1: Highway Improvement and Traffic Management.
- T10: Parking
- MW11: Contaminated Land.

#### **4.4 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

- Section 2. Achieving sustainable development;
- Section 5 Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
- Section 7. Ensuring the vitality of town centres
- Section 9. Promoting sustainable transport
- Section 11. Making effective use of land
- Section 12. Achieving well-designed places

#### **4.5 Other Policies**

Ashton-under-Lyne Town Centre Strategy Supplementary Planning Document

Residential Design Supplementary Planning Document.

It is not considered there are any local finance considerations that are material to the application.

#### **4.6 Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)**

- 4.7 This is intended to complement the NPPF and to provide a single resource for planning guidance, whilst rationalising and streamlining the material. Almost all previous planning

Circulars and advice notes have been cancelled. Specific reference will be made to the PPG or other national advice in the Analysis section of the report, where appropriate.

## **5.0 PUBLICITY CARRIED OUT**

5.1 As part of the planning application process 12 notification letters were sent out to neighbouring properties on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2019 and a notice was posted at the site on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2019. A notice was published in a local newspaper on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

## **6.0 RESPONSES FROM CONSULTEES**

6.1 The Head of Environmental Services (Environmental Protection) has raised no objection and has suggested that conditions: restricting the hours of work during the conversion; and requiring the provision of the proposed bin storage facilities, an acoustic assessment, and a scheme for the ventilation of the building be attached to any permission.

6.2 The Head of Environmental Services (Highways) has raised no objection and has suggested that a condition requiring the provision of the proposed cycle storage facilities, and informative notes regarding postal addresses and working near to a highway, be attached to any permission.

6.3 United Utilities has no objection and suggested a number of conditions to ensure a sustainable system of drainage be attached to any permission.

## **7.0 SUMMARY OF THIRD PARTY RESPONSES RECEIVED**

7.1 The occupier of a house in West Street, behind the church, has raised the issue of on-street parking in the street being contentious and has asked whether a permit holder parking scheme could be considered and if the provision of additional parking has been considered in the application.

## **8.0 ANALYSIS**

8.1 The key issues to be assessed in the determination of this planning application are:

- 1) The principle of development and the impact on highway safety and the road network
- 2) Design and appearance
- 3) Impact on existing residential amenities
- 4) Residential environment created

## **9.0 HIGHWAYS**

9.1 Principle of development and the impact on highway safety and the road network

9.2 There being extant permission for the conversion to residential use and the Church being situated in a highly accessible town centre location close to services and transportation infra-structure and, being unallocated, the principle of conversion of the existing building is considered acceptable and compliant with policies 1.5, H2, T1 and T10 of the UDP and Sections 2, 7, 9 and 11 of the NPPF.

## **10.0 DESIGN AND APPEARANCE**

10.1 Proposed alterations to the external fabric of the building are relatively minor and comprise mainly the introduction of new, full-height windows from existing ground floor sill level up to the existing first floor window head heights. Where possible, all window frames would be recessed into the openings to ensure that all modifications are visually as minimal as possible. The new first and second floorplates would be hidden by darkened glass where these would intersect with the new full-height windows. Designed to facilitate the optimum use, the proposed alterations are considered sympathetic to the character and appearance of the building and so compliant with policies 1.3 and H10(a) of the UDP and Section 12 of the NPPF.

## **11.0 IMPACT ON EXISTING RESIDENTIAL AMENITIES**

11.1 Existing windows in the single-storey section at the rear of the Church look out on to the rear yards of the terraced houses behind in West Street. These windows would be bricked-up. Existing windows to be retained in the rear elevation of the main church building would be to non-habitable rooms and would be glazed with frosted glass to prevent undue over-looking of flats in the neighbouring houses behind.

11.2 Windows to flats towards the rear of the building on the western side would be part glazed with frosted glass to prevent undue over-looking of flats in the neighbouring building.

11.3 Given the above, and that the proposal being for the reuse of an existing building, it is considered that there would be no undue the impact on existing amenities, in terms of over-looking, over-shadowing and noise, and so in these respects the proposal is considered acceptable and compliant with policy H10(d) of the UDP, policy RD5 of the SPD and Section 12 of the NPPF.

11.4 The proposal includes an internal bin storage area. The discreet means of bin storage and satisfactory means for collection, so negating the need for bins to be stored on street, are considered acceptable and compliant with policy H10(a) of the UDP, policy RD5 of the SPD and Section 12 of the NPPF

## **12.0 RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENT CREATED**

12.1 Reflecting the requirement of Section 12 of the NPPF, that developments create places with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users, UDP policy H10(a) requires that the design of proposed housing developments, which are acceptable in relation to other relevant policies in the plan, meets the needs of the potential occupiers. To this end policy RD18 of the Residential Design SPD recommends minimum floorareas that residential developments should achieve. The proposal would provide a minimum one-bedroom flat size of 37sqm and a minimum two-bedroom size of 61sqm and achieves the requirements of nationally prescribed Technical Housing Standards. In terms of the amount of living accommodation that would be provided the proposal is therefore considered of an adequate size to comply with policy H10(a) of the UDP and Section 12 of the NPPF.

12.2 According to policy RD6 of the SPD, frosted glazing should not be installed into the primary windows of habitable rooms in order to overcome privacy distance short falls (see paragraph 11.2). Such glazing should only be used in bathroom windows or for ornate features. In this instance the use of frosted glass to overcome privacy distance short falls is considered acceptable in order to make optimal use of the potential of the building, in accordance with paragraph 123 of the NPPF, and because:

in each instance there would be other non-frosted glass windows to the rooms;

in the windows in the side of the building not all of the panes in the respective windows would be frosted, the upper panes would be clear glass; and,

although the proposal intensifies the use of the building windows already exist in these locations; and, being located towards the rear of the side of the building and in the rear wall, none of the frosted glass windows would be particularly conspicuous.

12.3 Where windows would be bricked-up in the single-storey section of the building at the rear, rooflights would be installed to give natural light in to one of the flats and to a secure cycle store.

12.4 In terms of the residential environment that would be created the proposal is considered complicit with policy H10(a) of the UDP and Sections 11 and 12 of the NPPF.

### **13.0 CONCLUSION**

13.1 The church has been vacant for a number of years and has not contributed to the community during this time. The alternative use of the building for residential purposes would bring a vacant building back into a positive use and secure its maintenance whilst making a positive contribution towards providing additional housing provision in a highly sustainable location. The associated social, environmental and economic benefits associated with such a use far outweigh the loss of a community facility, especially given the town centre location.

13.2 The bringing forward of residential development in a highly accessible location, the contribution to the Borough's housing supply, the efficient re-use of an existing building, without impinging unduly on any existing amenities, it is considered that the proposed development would provide new dwellings that are well integrated with neighbours and constitutes a sustainable development that conforms to the relevant requirements of the Residential Design SPD, the UDP and the NPPF. The recommendation is therefore for approval.

### **14.0 OTHER ISSUES**

14.1 It is not considered that there is scope for providing parking within the development site and it facing directly across Wellington Road towards the Tameside Transport Interchange, and a short walk to the railway station, and so in a highly accessible location, no additional parking provision is considered necessary. A residents' parking has scheme has not been considered in this locality and the neighbour making the representation (see paragraph 7.1) has been directed to the Council's Traffic Operations section to explore the possibility.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Grant planning permission, subject the following conditions:

1. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

- ref. S-01 – OS\_Map (Location Plan)
- ref. S-02 Existing Plans and Sections
- ref. S-03 – Existing Plans and Sections
- ref. S-04 – Proposed Plans

ref. S-05 – Proposed Sections  
ref. S-06 – Proposed Elevations

2. Prior to the commencement of development, the CLS2B Contaminated Land Screening Form shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Council's Environmental Protection Unit (EPU). Where necessary, a scheme to deal with any contamination / potential contamination shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by the EPU. The scheme shall be appropriately implemented and a completion report demonstrating this and that the site is suitable for its intended use will be approved in writing by the EPU prior to occupation. The discharge of this planning condition will be given in writing by the Local Planning Authority (LPA) on completion of the development and once all information specified in this condition has been provided to the full satisfaction of the LPA.
3. Prior to the commencement of development, an assessment, by a person suitably qualified in acoustics, shall be undertaken, and submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval, to determine what the noise impact from traffic and the adjacent bus station will have on the proposed development. The assessment shall be undertaken using the relevant British Standards, BS8233:2014, and shall identify any mitigation measures required in order to satisfy the aforementioned British Standards. Any mitigation measures identified as being required shall be implemented prior to the first occupation of the development. Written proof shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority that all agreed mitigation measures have been implemented.
4. Prior to the commencement of development a scheme for the ventilation of the building providing measures to protect future occupiers from the impacts of local air quality (Nitrogen Dioxide) shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include details of the make and specifications of the Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery units (MVHR) to be incorporated in to the development along with the method(s) of nitrogen dioxide filtration and any required maintenance. The measures within the approved scheme shall be implemented in full prior to the first occupation of the development and be retained at all times thereafter. Written proof shall be provided to the Local Planning Authority that all mitigation measures have been installed in accordance with the approved details
5. During construction/conversion no work (including vehicle and plant movements, deliveries, loading and unloading) shall take place outside the hours of 07:30 and 18:00 Mondays to Fridays and 08:00 to 13:00 Saturdays. No work shall take place on Sundays and Bank Holidays
6. Notwithstanding any description of materials in the application, prior to their use in the development samples or a full specification of the new window frames, zinc panels and graphite glass panels, as indicated on the approved plan ref. S-06, and the external finishes to the cycle storage enclosures, indicated on the approved plans, refs. S-04 and S-06, shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. Such details shall include the type, colour and texture of the materials. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. Any re-glazing shall be with comparable approved glass.
7. The refuse bin and cycle storage areas, indicated on the approved plans, refs. S-04 and S-06, shall be provided prior to the first occupation of the development hereby approved and retained thereafter for the intended purpose at all times.
8. The window panes in the west facing elevation and the windows in the second floor of the rear elevation, as indicated on the approved plans, refs. S-04 and S-06, shall be glazed with frosted glass equivalent to at least grade 4 on the Pilkington scale. Any re-glazing shall be with comparable frosted glass.

9. All new windows shall be constructed with reveals, or recesses, to a depth of at least 90mm
10. Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby approved a contract, details of which shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority, for the collection of refuse shall be made.
11. Prior to first occupation of the development hereby approved, a scheme for any television/radio aerial/satellite dish or other form of antenna shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be constructed with such approved details.
12. Notwithstanding the provisions within the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), no television or radio aerial, satellite dish or other form of antenna shall be installed on the exterior of the building, other than those approved through the discharge of condition no.12.
13. No development shall commence until a surface water drainage scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The drainage scheme must include:
  - (i) An investigation of the hierarchy of drainage options in the National Planning Practice Guidance (or any subsequent amendment thereof). This investigation shall include evidence of an assessment of ground conditions and the potential for infiltration of surface water;
  - (ii) A restricted rate of discharge of surface water agreed with the local planning authority (if it is agreed that infiltration is discounted by the investigations); and
  - (iii) A timetable for its implementation.

The approved scheme shall also be in accordance with the Non-Statutory Technical Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems (March 2015) or any subsequent replacement national standards.

The development hereby permitted shall be carried out only in accordance with the approved drainage scheme.

- 15 Foul and surface water shall be drained on separate systems.