

67711 – St John in the Wilderness, Whalley Road, Shuttleworth

Conversion of existing church into a single dwelling

The building is considered to be a Non-Designated heritage Asset (NDHA) and as such is included on the Councils' draft local list of heritage assets:

The church is not of national significance.

- The dwelling has been identified as a non-designated heritage asset in accordance with Annex 2 of the NPPF and is considered to be a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing). The 'Good Practice Advice Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking' published by Historic England (2015) clarifies non-designated assets as those "....that have been identified in a Historic Environment Record, in a local plan, through local listing or during the process of considering the application."

It is not within a conservation area.

Paragraph 203 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

It is considered the church does have some level of architectural aesthetic value that would contribute to any significance it possesses.

An extant planning permission 66744 for the conversion of the church to a 2 bedroom dwelling with all accommodation contained at ground floor level was considered acceptable by virtue of the minimal and reversible alterations required to facilitate the conversion. This minimal adaptation required the addition of rooflights to the east elevation and a limited number of two pairs of rooflights to the west elevation. The adaptation did not require any further alteration to the external fabric of the building such as alterations or additions to window openings, additional openings or dormer roof extensions or alterations to its internal structure.

The original submission of this application (67711) would convert the church to a 3 bedroom dwelling. The sleeping accommodation would be contained on a new mezzanine level covering approximately 60% of the internal footprint area with the rest of the living accommodation contained at the ground floor.

The scale of this first iteration for the proposed internal alterations required to facilitate the conversion with its inherent level of adaptation would require the addition of two dormers to the east elevation, addition of 5 large rooflights and new bifold door opening, the addition of 5 sets of larger roof lights to the west

elevation, the alteration of two lancet windows on the south elevation to create two new door openings in order to provide additional natural light and the removal of all stained glass windows.

The proposed adaptations would have impacted directly on the church to an unacceptable level and would have resulted in an alteration to the external appearance of the church which would, on balance, harm the architectural aesthetic value it possess by way of diminishing its legibility to an unacceptable level.

Through a series of revisions an appropriate level of adaptation has been achieved. The mezzanine is still proposed as is the removal of the stained glass windows and alterations to the lancet windows to the south elevation. The number and size of the rooflights have been reduced and the one dormer has been removed from the scheme. There would now be a single dormer to the eastern roof slope with sloping roof instead of the previous box design. It would incorporate a glass roof slope on its lower part terminating at eaves level. A new opening with bifold doors would be created under where the glass element of the roof terminates.

It is considered that whilst these proposals do represent more interventional adaptation to the church than the extant consent 66744 it is unlikely that scheme could have been implemented in a fully sustainable and viable way. This revised scheme allows the adaptation to be carried out that would meet current building regulations standards to provide a sustainable and viable dwelling. With regards to the requirements of paragraph 203 of the NPPF this adaptation can be balanced against any direct harm to its significance. The proposals do not represent a level of harm that would cause an unacceptable loss of heritage significance of the church by virtue that its external legibility as a church would be maintained in the street and wider context as would its internal legibility. As such, balanced against the potential total loss the church and its further continuing decay the proposal is acceptable.

It is recommended that a condition is attached to any consent for the recording of the stained glass windows and internal historic fixtures or fittings to be removed as part of the conversion.

It is recommended an informative is also added regarding the disposal and storage of such fixtures and fittings.

Mark Kilby PG Dip (Building Conservation and Adaptation)

Conservation Officer

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