

Design & Access Statement for Conversion of Redundant Chapel into Residential Dwelling

Address: Methodist Chapel, Temple Mill Road (leading to, & also known as Colony Road), Sibford Gower OX15 5RX

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1. The Proposal

The proposal seeks planning consent for conversion from a redundant chapel to a 2-bedroom residential dwelling with the minimum of external changes and the construction of an off-road parking space (created by moving back the current boundary wall). The elevation view of the wall will remain unchanged.

The redundant chapel is a detached single storey brick building under a slate roof in the centre of the village of Sibford Gower. The road facing elevation of the building is rendered. The property lends itself to the conversion to a residential dwelling. The present structure has sufficient internal height to accommodate a two-storey dwelling. Outside there is an elevated front garden. Please see the attached pack of plans and photographs of the redundant chapel.

The main part of the building was constructed in the mid 1860s, on the front elevation both the extension and the tiled entrance porch were added in the 1930s. The frontage faces east.

The building is in a conservation area in the village of Sibford Gower along Temple Mill Road (also called Colony Road). Traditional oolitic limestone and red brick buildings, typical to this area, flank it.

2. The Design Process & Brief

The building benefits from a large uninterrupted floor plan with a garden at the front. The design is the installation of a new first floor over part of the ground floor area, the other part will maintain the integrity of the hall space from ground to ceiling level. The current kitchen and utility area will remain largely as it is. The design achieves well-proportioned accommodation without the need for major external work to the building. Externally roof lights have been proposed so that sufficient lighting conditions can be maintained internally whilst minimising the changes to the outside (only 2 roof lights have been proposed at the front of the building, the impact of these is very low – please see page 11 of the application plans). The first floor will have sections set back at the large windows so that the effect of the new first floor cutting across the windows will be mitigated externally. With this proposal the architectural merit of the building will be maintained whilst providing reasonable living accommodation.

The building is already served with mains water, mains sewage and electricity. So, there will be no impact on these services.

A parking area at the front of the property has been proposed. We believe this can be constructed without detriment to the character of the building and the view of building and wall from the street. The main benefits of the proposal come from retaining the architectural merit of the building and bringing an historic building back into use as a residential dwelling. This will help to achieve the requirements set by government in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), particularly the presumption of sustainable development when there is no conflict with the Local Plan.

Due to the location (rural village location setting), size and nature of this building (higher cost and additional need for maintenance) it does not lend itself to affordable housing, which would require significant changes to the building structure and character that would be detrimental to its architectural value.

The Methodist Church closed the redundant chapel in 1 June 2014 because of the small congregation and lack of interest which meant there were not enough funds to maintain the building or run it.

The lack of parking, the potential for increased traffic, the elevated position of the existing building, and the proximity of other neighbouring properties makes the redundant chapel unsuitable for alternative community uses. In addition, there are several other meeting places of this nature in the Sibfords (Sibford Gower, Burdrop and Sibford Ferris).

Other religious and public type buildings in the Sibfords include:

- Village Hall (with ample parking and open space)
- Holy Trinity Church, Sibford Gower
- Quaker Friends' Meeting House
- Sibford Gower Endowed Primary School (Ages: 4 to 11)
- Sibford Independent School (Ages: 3 to 18)
- Wykham Arms Pub
- Village Shop & Post Office
- Doctor's Surgery

The design brief is below, please see the attached plans for further detail.

- The former chapel is a modest and very simple building and the proposed scheme sets out to minimise changes to its external appearance
- The existing doors and windows will be retained and refurbished as necessary
- The entrance porch and door will be retained in their current form and will be renovated as required
- Two additional conservation Velux type roof windows are proposed for the East elevation (front) and with one on the South elevation, and four on the West elevation (back)
- Traditional cast iron type guttering and down pipes will be retained
- It is proposed to make provision for the off-road parking of one car, this will involve digging out part of the garden and changes to the stone boundary wall
- There will be provision for bins, bicycles & garden tools
- The proposed accommodation has two bedrooms, one on a gallery floor, with a double height living room and the retention of the existing kitchen and utility spaces.
- The objective is to provide a modest home that will complement and enhance the street scene

3. The Design Component

Use

A dwelling house with a parking space in front.

Amount of development/ Size and Scale

The existing main room of the redundant chapel is 7.3m x 5.8m x 5.6m high. The existing kitchen area is 3.2m x 3.5m x 3.5m high. Total area is 43m².

Proposed unit and layout

The design is the installation of a new first floor over part of the ground floor area, the other part will maintain the integrity of the hall space from ground to ceiling level.

The present kitchen area will be retained and modernised.

Landscaping and appearance

The front wall will be moved back to construct a parking space in front of the building. The stone will be reused to match the existing wall as far as possible.

Proposed Materials

No new external construction is proposed.

Bin Storage Area

This is marked on the application plans, page 14.

Bicycle storage

A shed for bicycle storage is marked on the application plans, page 14. The use of bicycles will reduce the amount of parking required.

Elevation appearance and materials

There will be minimal changes to the building. Roof lights will be of conservation type and double glazed. Only 2 roof lights have been proposed at the front of the building, the impact of these is very low – please see page 11 of the application plans. New doors will match the existing.

Impact on neighbouring properties

The only impact is likely to be from the proposed roof lights. It will not be possible to look out of the roof lights because of their height above floor level. These have been kept to a minimum and will generally overlook areas already overlooked by other properties.

4. The Access Component

Vehicle and transport links.

The redundant chapel is located on Temple Mill Road leading to Colony Road. A daily bus at regular intervals between Stratford upon Avon and Banbury passes very near-by.

In emergencies

There are no increased difficulties for the emergency services in relation to this development as vehicular access would continue to be via the public road.

To/ from amenities

Travel is possible by foot, bicycle, bus and car. There is no impact on these modes of travel by allowing this application.

Disabled Access

Part M of the Building Regulations has, and will be, considered in the detailed design stage to reasonably achieve disabled requirements where possible, given the restrictions of the site.

5. Planning Policy Considerations

This proposal complies with planning policy in general, and specifically the following policies:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and 'saved policies' of the Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996 (ACLP).
- Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1. Particularly PSD1 and ESD 15.
- Design, Appearance, Sustainability and Planning Out Crime.
- Cherwell Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (July 2018)

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and 'saved policies' of the Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996 (ACLP).

Sections H13, H21, C28, C30 and ENV12 are particularly relevant:

- H13: Residential development in category 1 settlements
- H21: Conversion of buildings in settlements
- C28: Layout, design and external appearance of new development
- C30: Design of new residential development
- ENV12: Development on contaminated land

This proposal complies with these policies, as well as this section please see comments under the Design Process & Brief section and the Pre-Application Stage section.

Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1

The relevant policy is ESD 15, 5: The Character of the Built and Historic Environment. This policy is used to assess development proposals: I have outlined below in italics how this proposal accords with ESD 15:

- Be designed to deliver high quality safe, attractive, durable and healthy places to live and work in. Development of all scales should be designed to improve the quality and appearance of an area and the way it functions. *This proposal provides an attractive place to live and the site is an attractive building that contributes to the appearance of the local area. The building will be retained which help to maintain the community of Sibford Gower.*
- Deliver buildings, places and spaces that can adapt to changing social, technological, economic and environmental conditions. *It is proposed to change the use of the redundant chapel to residential use, thus adapting to the social and economic conditions.*
- Support the efficient use of land and infrastructure, through appropriate land uses, mix and density/development intensity. *By changing the use of the redundant chapel, land and infrastructure will be used efficiently.*
- Contribute positively to an area's character and identity by creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness and respecting local topography and landscape features, including skylines, valley floors, significant trees, historic boundaries, landmarks, features or views, in particular within designated landscapes, within the Cherwell Valley and within conservation areas and their setting. *This proposal will not change the local topography or landscape features significantly, if at all, due to a change of use. The local distinctiveness will be reinforced as there are no material changes proposed to the exterior of the building and so the character of the building will be maintained and enhanced as will the Conservation Area of Sibford Gower with Burdrop Conservation Area.*
- Conserve, sustain and enhance designated and non-designated 'heritage assets' (as defined in the NPPF) including buildings, features, archaeology, conservation areas and their settings, and ensure new development is sensitively sited and integrated in accordance with advice in

the NPPF and NPPG. Proposals for development that affect non-designated heritage assets will be considered taking account of the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset as set out in the NPPF and NPPG. Regeneration proposals that make sensitive use of heritage assets, particularly where these bring redundant or under used buildings or areas, especially any on English Heritage's At Risk Register, into appropriate use will be encouraged. *Instead of the redundant chapel falling into disrepair it will be maintained and preserved. No material changes are proposed to the exterior fabric of the building, the character of the building will be conserved, maintained and enhanced as will the Conservation Area of Sibford Gower with Burdrop Conservation Area.*

- Include information on heritage assets sufficient to assess the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. Where archaeological potential is identified this should include an appropriate desk based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation. *This policy is not relevant to the application.*
- Respect the traditional pattern of routes, spaces, blocks, plots, enclosures and the form, scale and massing of buildings. Development should be designed to integrate with existing streets and public spaces, and buildings configured to create clearly defined active public frontages. *This policy is not relevant as no material alterations are proposed to the exterior of the redundant chapel.*
- Reflect or, in a contemporary design response, re-interpret local distinctiveness, including elements of construction, elevational detailing, windows and doors, building and surfacing materials, mass, scale and colour palette. *The application will be retaining all the original external features of the redundant chapel.*
- Promote permeable, accessible and easily understandable places by creating spaces that connect with each other, are easy to move through and have recognisable landmark features. *Not applicable.*
- Demonstrate a holistic approach to the design of the public realm to create high quality and multi-functional streets and places that promotes pedestrian movement and integrates different modes of transport, parking and servicing. The principles set out in The Manual for Streets should be followed. *Not applicable.*
- Consider the amenity of both existing and future development, including matters of privacy, outlook, natural lighting, ventilation, and indoor and outdoor space. *The development takes account of the privacy of neighbours, natural lighting and ventilation.*
- Limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation. *There is no additional external lighting proposed by this application.*
- Be compatible with up to date urban design principles, including Building for Life, and achieve Secured by Design accreditation. *Not applicable.*
- Consider sustainable design and layout at the master planning stage of design, where building orientation and the impact of microclimate can be considered within the layout. *Not applicable.*
- Incorporate energy efficient design and sustainable construction techniques, whilst ensuring that the aesthetic implications of green technology are appropriate to the context (also see Policies ESD 1 - 5 on climate change and renewable energy). *Reusing the existing building and incorporating insulation will address this policy as much as possible.*
- Integrate and enhance green infrastructure and incorporate biodiversity enhancement features where possible (see Policy ESD 10: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment and Policy ESD 17 Green Infrastructure). Well designed landscape schemes should be an integral part of development proposals to support improvements to biodiversity, the micro climate, and air pollution and provide attractive places that improve people's health and sense of vitality. *Not applicable.*
- Use locally sourced sustainable materials where possible. *Not applicable.*

Design, Appearance, Sustainability and Planning Out Crime.

The NPPF places design considerations as an important part of the planning process. Supported by paragraphs 56 to 68. This is also covered by C28: Layout, design and external appearance of new development, which is addressed under the Pre-Application Stage heading.

The building will stay in its current form, no material changes are proposed to the exterior of the building. Only internal changes are proposed as shown in the accompanying plans. Existing internal features will be retained where possible (e.g. doors and roof timbers). Thus, there will be no impact on the character and appearance of the Sibford Gower with Burdrop Conservation Area. Longer term the conservation area will be enhanced because this proposal provides a reason to conserve, maintain and enhance a redundant building.

Seven attributes of designing out crime are outlined in Safer Places – The Planning System and Crime Prevention. These are listed below with an explanation in italics of how this proposal addresses each point:

1. Access & Movement: Places with well defined routes, spaces and entrances that provide for convenient movement without compromising security. *The layout of the building and the surrounding land provides clear routes and entrances and creates easily monitored spaces avoiding blind spots as far as possible. The change of use from a place of worship to residential dwelling will not compromise security. A residential dwelling is likely to improve general security.*
2. Structure: Places that are laid out so that crime is discouraged and different uses do not cause conflict. *The building is long established (so will not encourage crime) and crime is discouraged because the building is overlooked by the houses surrounding it and by passes by.*
3. Surveillance: Places where all publicly accessible spaces are overlooked. *The building is overlooked and has a relatively high level of activity at various times of day which make it a well surveyed location.*
4. Ownership: Places that promote a sense of ownership, respect, territorial responsibility and community. *The private space for the building will remain as it is now.*
5. Physical Protection: Places that include necessary, well designed security features. *All possible entrances into the building are overlooked. Physical protection measures will be incorporated into the scheme in the form of an alarm system, robust doors and improved locks.*
6. Activity: Places where the level of human activity is appropriate to the location and creates a reduced risk of crime and a sense of safety at all times. *The level of human activity will be appropriate for this location. There is a sense of safety at all times.*
7. Management and maintenance: Places that are designed with management and maintenance in mind, to discourage crime in the present and the future. *The building is relatively straight forward to manage and maintain. This will help to discourage crime.*

Cherwell Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (July 2018)

This proposal adheres to this guide where possible.

6. Pre-Application Stage Responses

Generally, all the concerns raised at pre-application stage have been addressed. This proposal will not harm the street scene, the setting of neighbouring listed buildings or the conservation area. The proposal complies with the provisions and aims of the Policy C28 of the ACLP and policies within the NPPF. With reference to the concerns:

Swifts

There is no evidence of swifts nesting on the site.

Design and Conservation

In this application there is no proposed change to the elevation of the existing building and minimal roof lights are proposed.

Land Contamination (policy ENV12)

There is no evidence of land contamination or a history which would indicate it was possible or likely. There is a long history, going back over 150 years, of residential use on this site and in this area – rather than industrial use. A Contaminated Land Questionnaire can be completed if required.

Highways

Other potential uses on this site would create a far greater demand for parking than the proposed residential use. Off-road parking is possible and has been proposed.

Principle of Development

The proposal is a sustainable development (NPPF, Para's 6, 7, 14 & 49. PSD1, Local Plan). The physical and natural environment is being conserved and enhanced:

- **Economic:** This proposal will contribute to the economy and the local society by providing housing in an area of need. The conversion of the building is likely to provide work for the local community. The proposal will contribute to the building of a strong responsive and competitive economy by changing the use of an existing redundant building.
- **Social:** An additional dwelling in the village will promote a strong, vibrant and healthy viable community. It is likely to help support the community, including the school, village hall and pub in Sibford Gower, the Quaker Friends' Meeting House, Holy Trinity Church in Sibford Gower, the local shop & post office in Sibford Ferris, the doctor's surgery in Burdrop, and the swimming pool at Sibford School. The proposal will also result in a higher quality of the built environment because the redundant chapel will be insulated, heated adequately (helping to preserve the building) and refurbished.
- **Environment:** The proposal will provide a viable long-term use for an unused building without any significant alteration to its appearance and structure. The building will be preserved and prevented from going into disrepair. By conserving an existing historic building of character, the environment is protected and enhanced by using resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution.

Saved policy H21 of the ALCP states:

“Within settlements the conversion of suitable buildings to dwellings will be favourably considered unless conversion to a residential use would be detrimental to the special character and interest of a building of architectural and historic significance. In all instances proposals will be subject to the other policies in this plan”.

Saved policy H13 of the ACLP restricts new residential development to infilling, minor development within the built up limits of the settlement or the conversion of non-residential buildings that accord with Policy H21. In each instance development proposals will be subject to the other policies in the plan.

This proposal accords with the provisions and aims of policies H13 and H21 of the ACLP and of Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (see also Planning Policy Considerations section).

Neighbour and Visual Amenity

All the comments under this heading have been addressed.

The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment within the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF). Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.

Saved Policies C28 and C30 of the Adopted Cherwell Local Plan seek standards of layout, design and external appearance, including the choice of external finish materials, which are sympathetic to the character of the context of the development. Further, development should be compatible with the character of the street scene and should not be visually intrusive.

The only visible external alterations proposed are rooflights and the construction of an off-road parking space.

Impact on Heritage Assets

All the comments under this heading have been addressed.

The property to the south of the redundant chapel is the Manor House, a grade II listed Heritage Asset, as is The Wykham Arms Public House 50 metres to the south-east of the site and Carters Yard (also known as Crossways) to the north-east. The site also sits within the Sibford Gower with Burdrop Conservation Area. The NPPF requires that any development must sustain and enhance the significance of Heritage Assets and should also make a positive contribution to the local character and distinctiveness. In the context of this proposal the emphasis is on ensuring that the historic significance of the Heritage Assets is not harmed.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (paragraph 132) states that:

“when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be”.

The only visible external alterations proposed are rooflights and the construction of an off-road parking space. So, this proposal will not detrimentally affect the setting of the listed buildings within the vicinity or the wider conservation area.

7. Planning History

The application site has no formal planning history, however, there are several planning applications relating to surrounding properties, generally within 100m of the site. These include:

Wykham Arms Pub Temple Mill Road Sibford Gower Banbury OX15 5RX

Renewal of 97/01758/LB for extension to provide 7 No. bed and breakfast/staff accommodation, improved kitchen facilities and ancillary storage

Ref. No: 03/00856/LB Status: Application Permitted

Carters Yard Main Street Sibford Gower Oxfordshire OX15 5RW

Alterations to part east elevation of conservatory involving removal of base wall and glazing and replaced with matching limestone wall, 1 no. door and blue slate roof

Ref. No: 06/01517/LB Status: Application Permitted

Internal alterations and creation of new doorway to annex, lower 2 no. windows on north elevation and alter 1 no. window on south elevation to dwelling with internal alterations (as amended by plans received 18.01.06 and additional plans received 08/02/06)

Ref. No: 05/02302/LB Status: Application Permitted

The Yews Main Street Sibford Gower Banbury OX15 5RT

Conversion/Rebuilding of existing lean to store into home office

Ref. No: 04/02574/F Status: Application Permitted

Yew Tree House, Main Street, Sibford Gower OX15 5RT

Extension, renovation, internal alterations, external alterations and alterations to garden wall (minor amendment from previous listed building consent for (a) window to rear elevation instead of door and (b) boiler flue installed through renovated stone wall and (c) the creation of French Doors on the principal elevation.

Ref. No: 17/02069/LB Status: Application Permitted

Wyatts Close Main Street Sibford Gower Banbury OX15 5RT

Single storey conservatory to rear of dwelling

Ref. No: 01/01387/F Status: Application Permitted

West Farm Cottage Main Street Sibford Gower Banbury OX15 5RT

Conversion of outbuilding and part of barn to form garden studio

Ref. No: 14/01608/F Status: Application Permitted

Buttslade House Temple Mill Road Sibford Gower Banbury OX15 5RX

Remove existing dormer replace with 3 no. conservation style rooflights.

Ref. No: 08/02034/F | Status: Application Permitted

Rebuilding and extension to existing annex to form ancillary accommodation. Double doors to gable wall of existing workshop (as amended by plans received 11/11/05)

Ref. No: 05/01892/F Status: Application Permitted

Change of use from offices to residential, (as amended by revised plan received 12.5.99)

Ref. No: 99/00615/F Status: Application Permitted

Temple Close Temple Mill Road Sibford Gower Banbury OX15 5RX

Replacement of single storey extension to south elevation with new single storey extension; demolition of conservatory to the south elevation and erection of covered garden structure; addition of two canopy porches to the front doors to the south elevation; and the replacement of first floor windows to the east and west elevation and the existing glazed lantern to the roof.

Ref. No: 16/01261/F Status: Application Permitted

Barnes Cottage Main Street Sibford Gower Oxfordshire OX15 5RT

Two storey rear extension

Ref. No. 11/00476/F Status: Application Permitted

The Mount Main Street Sibford Gower Banbury OX15 5RT

Erection of conservatory at rear

Ref. No: 99/00798/F Status: Application Permitted

The Old Post Office Main Street Sibford Gower Banbury OX15 5RT

Conversion of outbuilding to form annex dwelling

Ref. No: 02/01886/F Status: Application Permitted

Variation of Condition 6 of application 02/01886/F - to allow annex to be used for holiday accommodation or for short term letting

Ref. No: 08/01006/F Status: Application Permitted

The Court House Main Street Sibford Gower Banbury OX15 5RW

Removal of existing profiled tin roof to be replaced with a traditional pitched roof on existing garage.

Ref. No: 14/00156/F Status: Application Permitted

Hillcrest Main Street Sibford Gower Banbury OX15 5RW

Demolition of existing outbuilding and single storey rear extension. Erection of single storey extension.

Ref. No: 14/00632/F Status: Application Permitted

The Old Co-Op Sibford Gower Banbury Oxon OX15 5RW

Single storey study extension at rear

Ref. No: 00/00633/F Status: Application Permitted

Coppers Pound Lane Sibford Gower Banbury OX15 5RR

Erection of replacement dwelling with garage/study, swimming pool, pool house and garden store.

Ref. No: 16/02204/F Status: Application Permitted

Minor alterations to the proposed plans and elevations, as noted on drawing 16-050-110 (proposed as non-material amendment to 16/02204/F)

Ref. No: 18/00058/NMA | Status: Application Permitted

Austin Grounds Farm Hook Norton Road Sibford Ferris Banbury OX15 5QR

Prior Approval - Conversion of existing agricultural building and an equal area of land to residential use

Ref. No: 15/00936/Q56 & 17/01087/Q56 Status: Application Permitted

Beyond The End Main Street Sibford Gower Oxfordshire OX15 5RN (next to Holy Trinity Church)

Demolition of existing dwelling, garage and outbuilding. Erection of two storey dwelling. Resubmission of permission 05/01254/F. (As amended by plan received 03.05.06.)

Ref. No: 06/00579/F Status: Application Permitted

Quince Cottage Bonds End Lane Sibford Gower Banbury OX15 5RT

Single storey rear extension. Single storey rear/side extension linked to existing barn. Alteration and conversion of barn to provide additional living accommodation and widened vehicle access. Detached garage. Internal and external alterations

Ref. No: 13/00659/LB | Status: Application Permitted

8. Conclusion

This application is a suitable development for this site and will bring back into use a redundant building no longer viable as a place of worship but suitable for residential use, whilst retaining its historic and attractive appearance.

The proposal has been assessed against national and local planning policies and is a 'sustainable' development – for which the policies are in favour of. The proposal will provide a new residential use for the building, which will result in a good design and a practical and operational solution. There will be a visual improvement over the alternative of an empty building falling into a further state of disrepair.

The use will not compromise the character of the conservation area or harm the street scene or the setting of neighbouring properties. Any highway concern has been addressed by incorporating a car parking space in front of the building. The use is sensitive and low key and is a viable and sustainable development which will help support the community and vitality of Sibford Gower.

There will be a positive impact on the Conservation Area of Sibford Gower with Burdrop by giving the building a long term use and the exterior of the building will not materially change.

There are no other material considerations which can be considered which cannot be mitigated using a condition.

This proposal meets the requirement of planning policy and other considerations addressed above, it is in the overall public interest to grant planning permission.