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Furlong Road Methodist Church:

Design and Access statement:

Planning Policy references:

Local development framework - CSP 29

National Planning Policy - Item 70

Introduction:

The existing Methodist Church building has recently been decommissioned from its original use as a meeting place for religious and community purposes. The loss of such a crucial community roll has successfully and sympathetically been mitigated by the upgrade of the neighbouring village hall.

The decline of the original church building was brought about by the ever rising expense of insuring and maintaining the building and during this decline it has become more exposed to vandalism and theft. As a central focal point for the area the church congregation have decided that the building needs to be given a new lease of life and a new purpose within the community. In order to pass the building on to new custodians, alterations have recently occurred which saw the original buildings' south elevation reduced in plan allowing a clear and new boundary between the village hall and the reconfigured Church building. The land gained by the village hall has then been landscaped to provide an external area for the users of the hall.

The existing building is a focal point on a long mixed residential and commercial street. The existing building, built of traditional methods deserves a fresh purpose without detracting from its heritage and appearance. Options for developing the building have been well considered by the trustees and they feel that affordable /accessible housing would allow the building to continue serving the community.

This application is for the change of use for the land denoted in the block plan from non-residential congregation /assembly to residential. And conversion of the building into 3 residential units

Appearance:

It is important to the village hall users and wider community that the character of the original Church building is maintained. The existing south gable elevation has been sympathetically dismantled and relocated towards the existing centre of the building and aligned with the rear side elevation. All dimensions and scale of this new gable now match the existing. All existing detailing have been replicated in reclaimed material wherever possible.

The proposal is to minimise external alterations to the church building and create 3 affordable residential unit that would benefit young families/couples within the area. One of the three properties is designed to be wheel chair accessible as well as affordable.

All parishioners and community members that have discussed the alterations with the church trustees are keen for the character of the building to be retained and see the change of use for the building as a positive step for the community as they would hate to see the building fall into further disrepair.

Conversion of the existing building will ensure the future of the building and facilitate its future within the community.

Visual impact and impact on neighbours:

The principle elevation; that viewed from the road, has incurred the greatest change in appearance but given the sympathetic and judicious workmanship the impact of this on the neighbouring community has been minimal and highly acceptable. All elevations as they now stand, will remain unchanged. With the only exceptions being, reconfigured openings on the north and east elevations. 2 conservation roof lights will also be installed to permit light into the wheel chair accessible bedroom of unit 3. All existing windows can be upgraded sympathetically in painted timber to match the existing whilst still positioned within their existing ashlar masonry surrounds.

Highways and vehicular access:

There will be no alteration to the existing highway access and the existing driveway will remain within the curtilage of the Church building and put to use by its future occupants. This existing driveway surface can be upgraded to permit vehicular access to the rear and designated off road parking for each of the units with a disabled parking space adjacent to the rear entrance of the wheel chair accessible unit. The unsued space will be set aside for communal garden/allotment space.

Accessibility:

The property is designed with specific users in mind – all external landscaping to the front and rear will permit ease of movement for the less ambulant and open up an established community building to well a considered use which reflects the churches original link to the community.

Summary:

This schemes overriding design principle is in line with Barnsley Local Development Framework CSP 29. The church, although proposed to be altered in internal layout and use will maintain its original aesthetic and character with high regard paid to high standards of building quality/materials and styling. The church building will remain a visual focal point for the community.

These design proposals also meet the requirements of outlined in item 70 of the National Planning Policy Framework. These proposals finalise the process of passing the churches original community purpose successfully onto the adjacent village hall. The communities day to day pastoral/ worship needs are well met and will continue to be so. The original church building is therefore ready to evolve into affordable and residential use.