



PLANNING CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Application No	2025/0532
Proposal	Conversion of vacant church and church hall; installation of first floor in church building and associated works to create 11 residential apartments (Use Class C3).
Address	Wesleyan Reform Church, Wakefield Road, Smithies, Barnsley, S71 1NP
Date of Consultation Reply	17/07/2025
Consultee	Charlie Atkinson Design and Conservation Apprentice

Consultation Assessment and Justification

The main consideration is:

- Whether or not the proposal would harm the heritage significance or impact on the setting of a Non Designated Heritage Asset (NDHA)

Policy

Where Planning Permission is required, the effect on a NDHA will be a material consideration.

NPPF 207 / 208: Identify and assess heritage significance including the setting and the effect of a proposal

NPPF para 212: Great weight is given to an asset's conservation, irrespective of the degree of harm

NPPF para 213: Any harm to or loss of significance will require clear and convincing justification

Barnsley Local Plan Policy HE1 The Historic Environment

Barnsley Local Plan Policy HE3 Developments affecting Historic Buildings

Conservation Comments:

This application seeks planning permission for the conversion of the empty Wesleyan Reform Church on Wakefield Rd into 11 residential apartments with associated works.

The church in question is not listed and has no national or local designation. However, it has been identified as a non-designated heritage asset which is a material consideration in the planning process meaning weight should be given to the historic and special interest of the building.

On looking at historic maps from the National Library of Scotland, the Wesleyan Reform Church was built in the early 20th century as a methodist church first appearing on the OS 1930 map, though we believe this to be an earlier development in the 1900s. The building has



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been for many years, and according to the latest online photos from [Pugh Auctions](#) the church itself has a simple but decorative interior with some modern alterations (lighting and electrical fittings) but mostly remains intact with most notably the building's existing roof beams which are of significant character. The church's exterior seems to remain intact with original features.

The proposal to convert the vacant church and hall into 11 new apartments includes the installation of a first floor within the church (building B) and separation of the space. In the church hall minimal works have been proposed but do include the internal separation of the space to create rooms and the installation of two rear access points.

Note – This application will be assessed in two parts to account for the church and the church hall proposals. Additionally, it should also be noted that this proposal requires further clarity – further information below.

The Church:

The proposal appears to have minimal impact on the external envelope of the building, thereby maintaining its architectural and historical character. However, while the overall external appearance may largely remain unchanged, the proposed alterations include the addition of eight new dormer windows, seven rooflights, a side access ramp, and the replacement of one window on the north elevation to provide emergency access. It is recommended that conservation rooflights be used throughout the development. We suggest that the four dormer windows visible from Wakefield Road be removed to preserve the building's historic appearance and architectural integrity. These could instead be replaced with conservation rooflights to achieve the similar functionality while maintaining the building's character. For the dormer windows proposed to the rear of the church, we recommend that they be clad in timber or lead, finished in an anthracite colour, rather than using PVC. This would ensure a more sympathetic and complementary appearance in keeping with the building's historic fabric. Regarding the windows throughout the building, it is evident that many have been broken (possibly due to antisocial behaviour) and will therefore require either repair or replacement. Any replacement windows should replicate the original profiles to maintain the building's character, and where stained glass is present, such as on the south elevation, secondary glazing should be installed to improve thermal performance without removing the original glazing. On site, a wire mesh has been installed in front of the stained-glass window to protect it from damage; we recommend that this be retained or similarly replaced to continue safeguarding the stained glass. To further enhance the building's energy performance, we advise that any new double-glazed units be of a slim profile to reflect the period character of the building.

Regarding the building's interior, it is acknowledged that certain features will be lost because of the conversion of the space into eleven apartments. However, it is noted that much of the internal fabric (particularly the existing walls) appear to have been retained, with modern partitions introduced to define individual apartments and rooms. The design also preserves the original window openings and the overall roof profile, which is welcomed. However, that said, there is some concern regarding the treatment of the timber roof beams during the internal conversion and installation of the first floor. Clarification is required as to whether these beams will be retained or removed and to how the addition of a first floor will work in terms of spacing. The timber beams retention is strongly recommended, given their contribution to the building's historic character and architectural interest.



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While we have little objections to the proposal in relation to the church building overall, we require further clarification on the following points:

- The removal of the four dormer windows visible from Wakefield Road
- The proposed cladding material for the rear dormers
- The profile and detailing of replacement windows
- The approach to secondary glazing, particularly in relation to stained-glass windows
- The design and treatment of external doors
- The retention and position of interior roof beams
- The installation of the first floor.

Church Hall:

The proposed works to the church hall are limited, with minimal internal and external changes. Externally, it is proposed that two rear windows at either end of the building are to be converted into access points, an alteration that does not affect the building. Internally, the existing layout remains largely unaltered due to the preservation of the original fabric; the primary change involves the introduction of modern partitions to subdivide the space. Our main concern as previously stated is the position and retention of the timber beams. Though as a result, the proposal does not detract from the character or significance of this non designated heritage asset.

Additionally, the front of the Church features a stone wall and gate posts, which likely once supported iron fencing. We recommend reinstating this or a similar boundary to distinguish public from private land and to enhance security. It can also be seen that bin storage and a level access ramp is to be implemented to the north of the building. This requires further clarification in terms of design.

Overall, we feel that this proposal will effectively revitalise the building, ensuring its conservation and maintenance of its unique character for future generations. This approach should safeguard the historic and architectural significance of the structure dating from the early 1900s. Therefore, from a conservation perspective subject to clarification and the above recommendations we suggest that this application is approved.

	Defer for amends/further information*	
*Delete as applicable		
<u>Consultation Suggested Conditions:</u>		
<u>Consultation Informative(s):</u>		
<u>Planning Obligations required:</u>		



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