2021/1675
Net on behalf of Cornerstone

Installation of 1 no. GPS node to be fixed externally on the Eastern face of the tower and associated ancillary development

St Thomas Church, Bank End Road, Worsborough Dale, Barnsley, S70 4AF

Site Location & Description

The application is in relation to St. Thomas Church located on Bank End Road in Worsborough Dale. The church was constructed from stone in 1858 and is grade-II listed. The Church is a rectangular shape with a tower/spire towards the Eastern side of the building which can be considered the front elevation as it contains the main access into the Church. It is located on the Northern side of Bank End Road, Worsborough, with the site raised up from the road itself with a stone retaining wall supporting a grass slope leading up to the church. The site has a significant North to South slope from the adjacent Yews Lane adjacent to the Northern boundary line. There is a public right of way (Worsbrough UD 10) running parallel to the East, connecting Bank End Road and Yews Lane. The church grounds are an irregular triangle shape with the church sitting in the middle of the site with access from the South-West. This serves as the main access into the church where is a small free-standing memorial at the entrance/exit, slightly raised up on a platform. This access leads up to the South-facing side elevation of the Church and eventually to the Front elevation of the Church facing. Parts of the site has been used as an historic graveyard with substantial tree coverage in the majority of the grounds.

The information and plans provided show that the church already has a GPS module on the South-facing side elevation and associated internal equipment with the information indicating that these are placed in the Church tower.







Historic England entry:

2/69 Church of St. Thomas and St. James GV II Church. 1858, consecrated 1860. By Flockton and Sons for patron F. W. T. Vernon-Wentworth; vestry added 1879. Coursed, dressed sandstone, Welsh slate roof. 4-bay aisled nave with south porch, 2-bay chancel with north and south vestries the latter rising as a 3-stage tower. Gothic Revival, in Early English style. Nave: chamfered plinth, buttresses at west angle and between bays 3 and 4. Porch to bay 2 with shafts in jambs of pointed arch, coped gable with cross. Other bays have paired lancets with quoined reveals and hoodmoulds. Clerestorey with small, cusped lancets in recessed panels beneath eaves corbel table. West window of 3 lancets with separate hoods. Gable copings with crosses. Tower: angle buttresses to lower stages flanking lancet windows, string courses between stages. Paired belfry lancets, set in recessed panels beneath corbel tables, have louvres and string course rising as hood. Octagonal, broach spire with louvred 2-light lucarnes and weathervane. Chancel: lower; bay 2 beyond tower has string course rising over lancet and continuing over east window of 5 lancets set in recessed ashlar panel; 2 lancets on right into vestry.

Interior: octagonal piers to double-chamfered aisle arcades, similar chancel arch on responds. 2-bay arcade to north vestry and organ chamber has moulded arches, eastern arch subdivided by central pier with blind quatrefoil in ashlar spandrel. Encaustic-tiled sanctuary. Font: 1879, octagonal with wrought-iron cover; replaces original font made of coal. Pulpit: octagonal set on marble shafts and with carved panels in ogee-headed niches, eagle lecturn carved on cornice. Traceried dado panelling; contemporary fittings include linenfold-panelled, part-glazed inner porch doors beneath arch inscribed "Enter into His Gates with thanksgiving". Stained glass east and west windows by Barnett and Co. Leith. Church originally dedicated to St. Thomas prior to amalgamation with St. James' in 1955.

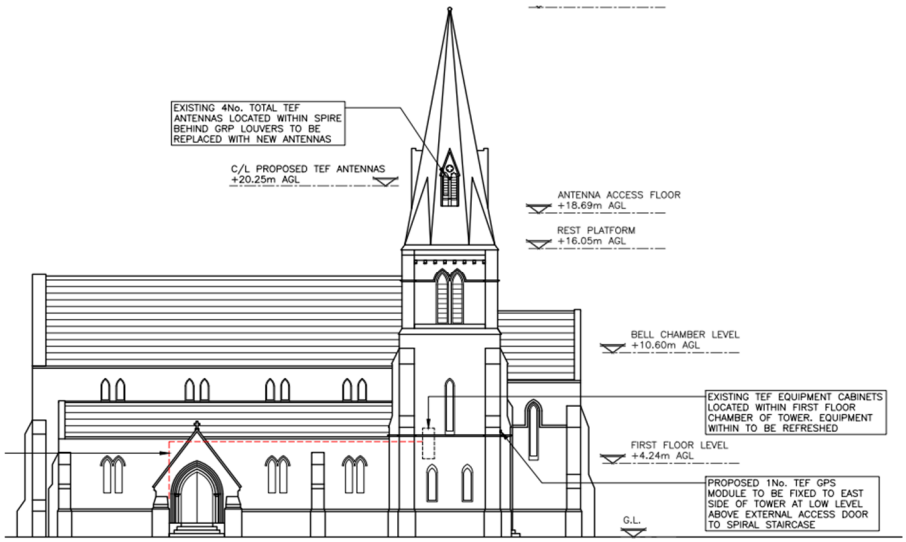
Proposed Development

The applicant is seeking approval for the installation of a GPS node attached to the Eastern-facing elevation of the church tower, above the access door to the spiral staircase. The GPS node measuring 69mm in diameter x 120mm and receives information but does not transmit. The node is mounted on a support bracket fixed directing to the wall.

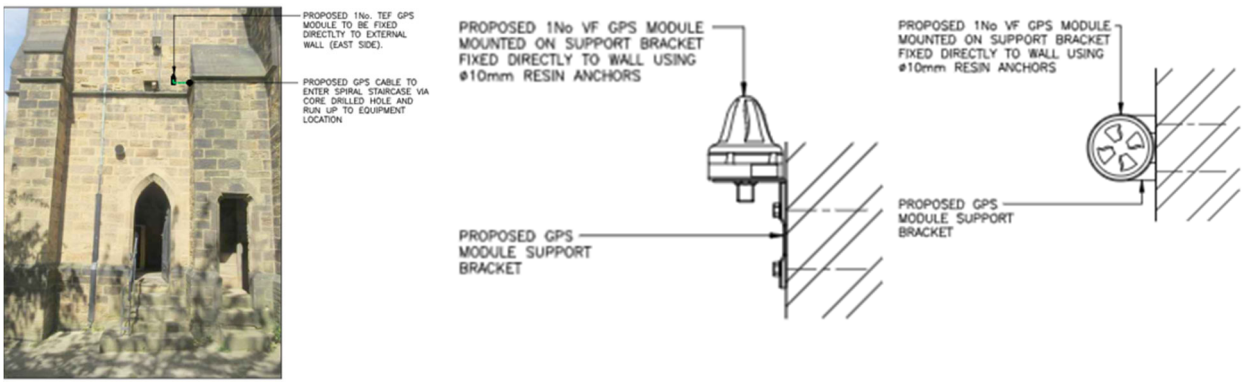
The development includes additional works including the upgrading of the existing antennas on the building internally including the following:

1. Existing 4 x no. TEF RRU's (Remote Radio Units) to be replaced by 5 x no. rail mounted RRUs.
2. Existing 2x no. TEF antenna to be replaced by new antennas.
3. Existing 1 no. TEF RRU to be removed
4. Existing 1 x no. TEF CSC Cabinet equipment to be refreshed.

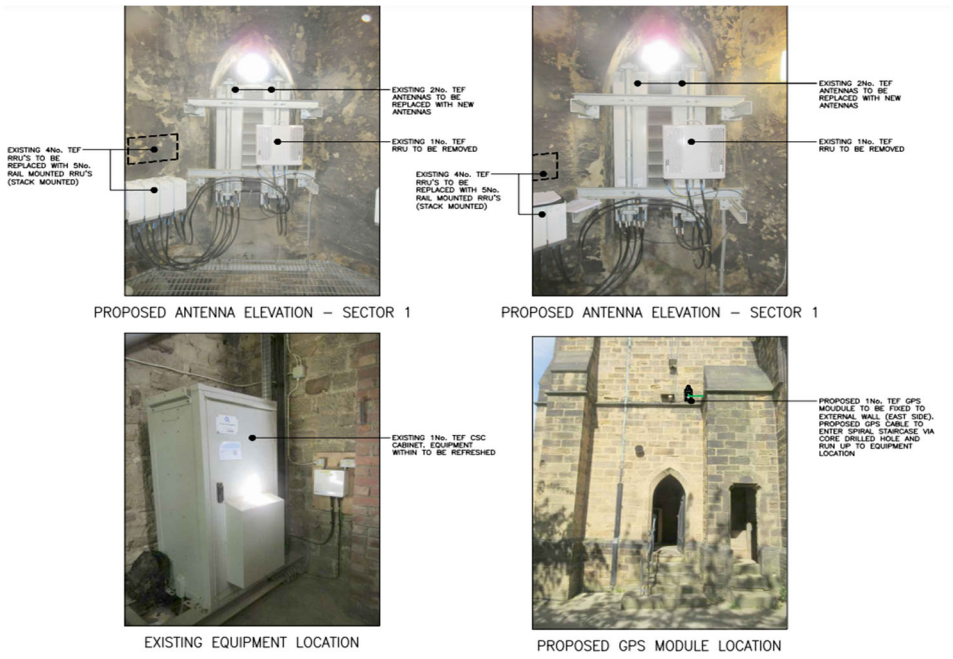
Proposed external alterations (Side South-facing elevation):



Proposed GPS Module location and design:



Proposed internal alterations:



Policy Context

Planning decision should be made in accordance with the local plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise and the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. The Council has also adopted a series of Supplementary Planning Documents and Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes, which are other material considerations.

NPPF

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. At the heart is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole; or where specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted or unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

In respect of this application, relevant policies include:

Section 12: Achieving well designed places - The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

It is important to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes.

Within section 12, paragraph 130 is the most relevant which indicates that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.

Paragraph 184 of the NPPF states that Heritage Assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.

Paragraph 192 states that, in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Local Plan

The new Local Plan was adopted at the full Council meeting held 3th January 2019 after it was found to be sound by the appointed Planning Inspector following the examination process. This means that it now takes on full weight for decision making process in planning law terms as the development plan for the Borough, superseding the remaining saved policies from the Unitary Development Plan (adopted in the year 2000) and the Core Strategy (adopted in 2011). In reference to this application, the following policies are relevant:

Policy SD1: Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development – sets out principles when considering development proposals.

Policy GD1: General Development – sets out appropriate proposals for development.

Policy HE2: Heritage Statements – Proposals that are likely to affect known heritage assets or sites where it comes to light there is potential for the discovery of unrecorded heritage assets will be expected to include a description of the heritage significance of the site and its setting.

Policy HE3: Developments affecting historic buildings – Proposals involving additions or alterations to listed buildings should seek to conserve and where appropriate, enhance that building's significance.

Policy D1: High quality design and place making – sets overarching design principles for the borough to ensure that development is appropriate to its context, and improves what needs improving, whilst protecting what is good about what we have.

Policy T4: New Development and Highway Improvement - New development will be expected to be designed and built to provide all transport users within and surrounding the development with safe, secure and convenient access and movement.

SPD: House extensions and Other Domestic Alterations

Supplementary Planning Document - House Extensions and Other Domestic Alterations sets out the design principles that specifically apply to the consideration of planning applications

for house extensions, roof alterations, outbuildings & other domestic alterations. The general principles are that proposals for should:

1. be of a scale and design which harmonises with the existing building
2. not adversely affect the amenity of neighbouring properties
3. maintain the character of the street scene and
4. not interfere with highway safety.

These policies are considered to reflect the 4th Core Principle in the NPPF, which relates to high quality design and good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

Consultations

Conservation officer – No objection as the detailed design issues and real risk of harmful (or not) impacts will be dealt with via the Diocesan Advisory Committee due to the ecclesiastical exemption.

Ward Councillors – No comment

Representations

Neighbour notification letters were sent out to surrounding properties and a site notice placed nearby; no comments were received.

Assessment

Principle of Development

The site is a grade-II listed building but does not require listed building consent due to having an ecclesiastical exemption. However, planning permission is still required for the development in which the impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties, impact on visual amenity and the Historic Environment will be assessed. There is an existing telecommunication equipment on the church which be added to by the proposed development and otherwise the church will remain unchanged and is acceptable in principle, subject to Local and National Planning Polices being complied with.

Impact on Visual Amenity and The Historic Environment

The church is grade-II listed but has an ecclesiastical exemption, hence not requiring a separate Listed Building Consent. However, standard assessment against Local Plan Policies D1: High Quality Design and Place Making and HE3: Listed Buildings will be necessary in order to ensure that high quality design is upheld and the development does not detrimentally impact the character of the area, or historic environment. The church already has telecommunications equipment but these are largely centred internally. The proposed GPS node will be added to the East facing elevation which is considered to be the frontage. The node will be at a low level just above the external access floor to the spiral staircase of the Church's Tower. The additional GPS node is very small in its size and will generally blend into the Eastern façade of the Church, especially given this elevation contains over small features such as a light, air vent and possibly an alarm. The site itself is raised over the road with significant tree coverage on large parts of the site, including to the South of the development. The height difference and the tree coverage largely screen the development when viewed from Bank End Road. The visual change to the church and street scene is considered to be very minor and do not detrimentally impact the character of the area.

The proposed development also includes internal works to the top of the tower including the replacement of 2 x antennas with new ones, the replacement of 4 x RRUs to be replaced by 5 x no. rail mounted RRUs and the existing cabinet to be refreshed but not fully replaced. All of these changes are internal, and the Conservation Officer advised that the detailed design will be dealt via the Diocesan Advisory Committee. The internal changes are completely screened and have no impact on the street scene or external appearance of the church.

The proposed alterations are clearly small scale with little visual impact on the character of the church or street scene, in compliance with Local Plan Policy D1 and HE3 and the impact on residential amenity is acceptable.

Residential Amenity

The alterations are very small scale with no perceived detrimental impact on residential amenity through overshadowing or loss of outlook. This is further reduced by the fact that the module is located on the church itself and is located at a distance of approximately 27m from the nearest residential building adjacent.

The impact on residential amenity is considered to be extremely minor and is in compliance with Local Plan Policy GD1: General Development and is acceptable.

Impact on Public Right of Way

There is a public right of way (PROW) running parallel to the East of the site connecting from Bank End Road to Yews Lane. The proposed development will not have a direct impact on the PROW given the size and separation distance to the PROW.

Highway Safety

No impact on Highway Safety.

Recommendation

Grant Approval with conditions: