
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 October 2016

by Andrew Dawe BSc(Hons) MSc MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 25 October 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3940/W/16/3154184

St Mary's Church, 20 Station Hill, Chippenham, Wiltshire SN15 1EG

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by St Mary's Church against the decision of Wiltshire Council.
 - The application Ref 16/00813/FUL, dated 19 January 2016, was refused by notice dated 19 May 2016.
 - The development proposed is construction of new disabled access cloakroom and meeting room.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for construction of new disabled access cloakroom and meeting room at St Mary's Church, 20 Station Hill, Chippenham, Wiltshire SN15 1EG in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 16/00813/FUL, dated 19 January 2016, subject to the following conditions:
 - i) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - ii) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: SMC/E/5.15, SMC/ES/4.16, SMC/RP/4.16, SMC/ES/4.16/1, SMC/E/10.14, SMC/D/2.16.
 - iii) No development shall commence until details/samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension and dormer windows hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details/samples.
 - iv) Notwithstanding the approved drawings, no development shall commence until details of the following have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority:
 - large scale details of doors (1:10 scale) and windows (1:5 scale) including vertical and horizontal cross-sections through openings to show set-backs and reveals (1:5 scale);
 - large scale details of proposed eaves and verges (1:5 scale section);
 - full details of external flues, background and mechanical ventilation, soil/vent pipes and their exits to the open air, and of rainwater goods.
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The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Main Issue

2. Whether the proposed development would preserve the architectural and historic integrity and appearance of the existing church and its setting and whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Chippenham Conservation Area (the CA).

Reasons

3. In respect of the church's historic integrity, I have not received any substantive evidence as to its significance as a non-designated heritage asset in its own right albeit that it has an attractive traditional form and design.
Architecturally, it is characterised by its traditional cross shaped form, albeit weakened to some degree by a clearly visible flat roof element filling the south-east corner on the St Mary's Place side of the building, together with an end garage and store building.
4. The CA is characterised by a variety of designs and ages of buildings in close juxtaposition, which is evident in the vicinity of the site. In that context, in particular the streetscene of Station Hill, the church is set back from the road in between the associated Presbytery on one side and a relatively modern building with a large, exposed and blank, rendered elevation on the other, both of which are set close to the road. As such, the church is not a dominating feature of Station Hill's streetscene albeit that it makes a pleasant contribution to it, both in terms of the traditional form and design of the building and its walled but still fairly open grassed frontage containing some trees and shrubs.
5. Due to the site's location within the CA, special attention has to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA. Special attention also has to be paid to preserving the significance of the church and its setting in terms of its non-designated heritage asset status.
6. In terms of the traditional form of the building, the proposed extension would not be an alien feature in the context of the existing flat roof element to the rear. Importantly, like that existing element, and despite its greater length and only slight projection in front of the existing transept gable elevation, it would be similarly subservient with its height set slightly below the eaves of the main church roof and use of matching materials. As such, the traditional cross shaped form of the main church would still be clearly evident through the retained prominence of the steep pitched roof, its associated eaves and the gable end of the transept, together with the retention of a significant amount of the existing original footprint.
7. The proposed windows and door in the extension would be closer together than those existing on that side of the church. Nevertheless there would be sufficient space between them to ensure that they would not dominate that new elevation where a significant amount of brickwork would be visible. Furthermore, their design and materials would complement the existing fenestration. I am therefore satisfied that the proposed fenestration in the extension would not appear cramped or inappropriate.
8. The proposed dormers would break the simple profile of the existing roof slopes to a degree. However, they would be relatively modest in size in the context of

the existing expanses of roof areas, and would be set low within those slopes. Furthermore, they too would utilise complimentary materials and their roof pitches would be similar to that of the existing main roof. They would also be set well back from the prominent existing transept gable elevations and their large ornate windows. For these reasons, they would appear as subservient features of the roof and church generally, without detracting from its overall form and design.

9. The above factors, together with the degree of set back from the street frontage and proximity and dominance of the large blank elevation of the adjacent building to the north-east of the site, would also ensure that the proposals would not be dominant features within the streetscene and CA generally. Instead, the predominating traditional form of the existing church and its pleasant frontage setting would continue to be the key focus.
10. For the above reasons, the proposed development would preserve the architectural and historic integrity and appearance of the existing church and its setting and would preserve the character and appearance of the CA. As such, it would accord with Core Policies 57 and 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy which together require development to be of a high standard of design and to ensure the conservation of the historic environment. It would also accord with sections 7 and 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework which respectively relate to requiring good design and conserving and enhancing the historic environment.
11. The Council has suggested five conditions that it considers would be appropriate were I minded to allow the appeal. I have considered these in the light of advice in the Government's Planning Practice Guidance and amended some of the wording and omitted one.
12. The standard time condition is required in this case and for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning, a condition requiring that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans would also be required. In the interests of the architectural and historic integrity and appearance of the existing church and its setting and the character and appearance of the CA, conditions would also be required to secure details/samples of materials that would be used on the external surfaces of the proposed extension and dormer windows; and large scale drawings to show the detailed design of the proposed fenestration, eaves and verges, as well as full design details relating to external flues, ventilation, soil/vent pipes and rainwater goods.
13. In respect of the materials condition referred to above, this would include details of the brickwork/stonework, roof, window, door and rainwater goods materials. A separate condition to secure an on-site stonework sample panel would not be necessary on the basis that a sample could be secured and submitted under the terms of the above materials condition.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Andrew Dawe

INSPECTOR