



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 January 2026

by **E Heron MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4th February 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/R0660/W/25/3375595

St Georges Street Baptist Church, St Georges Street, Macclesfield SK11 6TG

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Wynne, Elivi Property Group against the decision of Cheshire East Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/0676/FUL.
 - The development proposed is described as 'converting St Georges Street Baptist Church into 8 luxury apartments and a 6-bedroom House in Multiple Occupation (HMO).'
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for converting St Georges Street Baptist Church into 8 luxury apartments and a 6-bedroom House in Multiple Occupation (HMO), at St Georges Street Baptist Church, Macclesfield SK11 6TG in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 25/0676/FUL, and subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the development would make adequate provision for car parking.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is within a historic residential area, comprising terraced properties, interspersed by large municipal or commercial buildings, and a walled park. Off-road parking is not a common feature. In the vicinity of the appeal site and the surrounding roads, there are few parking restrictions or vehicular site accesses. The appeal site is a substantial building with a modest vehicle parking area accessed from Grapes Street.
4. Policy SD1 of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy¹, requires that new development, wherever possible, should provide safe access and sufficient car parking in accordance with adopted highway standards. Appendix C of the Local Plan Strategy sets out the parking standards. For the appeal proposal, Appendix C gives a requirement for 18 parking spaces. As the development would provide four off-road parking spaces, there would be a shortfall of 14 spaces.
5. Paragraph C.1 of Appendix C, states that the parking standards will only apply where there is clear and compelling justification that it is necessary to manage the road network. Paragraph C.2 states that the Council will accept representations to

¹ Cheshire East Local Plan, Local Plan Strategy 2010 – 2030 (2017)

vary from car parking standards on a site-by-site basis with reference to evidence obtained locally or from a suitable data source (e.g. TRICS).

6. The car parking survey undertaken by the highway authority across two evenings in August 2025, resulted in an average finding of 30 available spaces across the survey area, and 21 available spaces on the closest streets (St Georges Street, Park Street and Lord Street).
7. The survey is a snapshot in time and is evidence that at those specific monitored times, the number of vacant spaces across the survey area was more than the number of spaces required by the development. The Council does not dispute the survey findings. During my day time site visit, I also observed there to be numerous spaces available on the aforementioned streets, interspersed between parked cars.
8. The site is located within walking distance to Macclesfield town centre and its shops, services, employment opportunities and public transport hubs. The quality of the local area therefore incentivises car free living, or a reduced number of vehicle trips. As such it is a location where opportunities to reduce reliance on the private car are encouraged by paragraph 110 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).
9. I am also told that there are public car parks within walking distance of the area, which increases the range of parking options available, even if parking charges have been introduced for evenings and Sundays. Moreover, it is not unreasonable to conclude that car ownership associated with the development would be less than 18 spaces, given the single person occupancy of the HMO and 1 bedroom units, coupled with the site's proximity to the town centre. I also attribute weight to the highway authority's removal of their objection on parking grounds.
10. I am mindful of the Council's stance, and that of interested parties, that at other times, there is much more demand for on road car parking, including parking from non-residents and theatre goers to the regular productions at MADS theatre. However, there is limited clear and robust evidence before me to demonstrate that the extent of local parking problems is so severe and regular that there would be no capacity for the additional car parking spaces required by the development. Particularly in the context of the number of available spaces that were observed over the wider survey area.
11. Interested parties comment that inappropriate parking makes it difficult to manoeuvre between streets. However, there is no evidence before me to indicate that this is a regular or isolated occurrence, or that such instances are directly attributable to the availability of on road parking.
12. My attention has been drawn to the high level of car ownership as part of the Cheshire East Council ward profile, and that 42% commute either as drivers or passengers. I am also told that many home owners do not benefit from off-street parking. However, this relates to a much wider area rather than site specific evidence. For example, it will include areas further from the town centre and will include locations with off-road car parking.
13. Taking account of all of the above factors, and in the absence of robust evidence to the contrary, I conclude that the development would make adequate provision for car parking. As such the development complies with Policy SD1 of the Local

Plan Strategy, and Policy HOU4 of the Cheshire East Local Plan, Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (2022) (SADPD). Together they seek to ensure development is prioritised to the most accessible and sustainable locations and supports HMOs where the proposal would not have an adverse impact on on-street car parking levels, amongst other things.

Other Matters

14. The site is within the High Street Conservation Area, which is significant for its 19th century planned arrangement as part of the industrial expansion of Macclesfield. It comprises terraced housing and larger community buildings including places of worship, such as the appeal building, which is also a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA). Externally, the proposal is limited to refurbishment, reinstatement of windows, wider repairs, the removal of a large extension and erection of a modest extension. On this basis, the development would preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and would not harm its significance. It would also amount to the sensitive re-use of the NDHA. I also note the Council's similar stance in this regard.
15. The development results in the loss of internal features, however these elements are not statutorily protected, and I have no reason to take a contrary view to the Council's on this matter.
16. Due to the close quarters relationship with nearby residential properties, including those on Park Street and St Georges Street, the scale of the building on multiple levels, and more intensive uses within the building, a scheme of obscure glazing would need to be imposed by way of a planning condition. The Proposed Section, Side Elevation (North), Rear Elevation drawings² serve to illustrate that the extent and height of obscuration within the windows would be effective in mitigating a loss of privacy to neighbouring occupiers.
17. Representations were made by several interested parties during the application process, raising a range of concerns in addition to those already considered under the main issue. The officer's committee report addresses the majority of these concerns and is informed by technical consultee responses, where relevant. They were also not advanced as reasons for refusal. Based on the information before me, I have no compelling reason to reach a different view. I return to this in the conditions section of my decision.
18. I acknowledge procedural concerns raised by interested parties in respect of the revised highway consultation response, and the availability of the survey to view on the web portal. However, this is not a matter that I can consider under a Section 78 planning appeal and does not alter my findings, in which I have had regard solely to the planning merits of the proposal.

Conditions

19. The Council has suggested a list of planning conditions. I have considered these conditions against advice contained in the Planning Practice Guidance, and where necessary I have amended them to remove superfluous wording, and to ensure enforceability and conciseness. The appellant has had the opportunity to comment during the appeal process and has agreed the pre-commencement condition.

² Drg. no 200; Drg. no 030 revision 1; Drg. no 029 revision 1

20. I have attached the standard time limit condition and a condition specifying the approved plans to provide certainty. I have imposed a condition requiring drainage details, this is to ensure the development drains effectively, and it is necessary for the detail to be considered pre-commencement as its design will influence the conversion works.
21. I have imposed a condition relating to the bird breeding season, for species protection, and a condition requiring a scheme to ensure biodiversity enhancement.
22. Details of any additional external facing materials will be required, to ensure harmonious treatment of the building. A condition stipulating the obscure glazing requirements is necessary to protect the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers with particular regards to privacy. A condition is also necessary to retain the car parking spaces for their intended purpose to minimise the extent of on road parking. Conditions requiring hard and soft landscaping and its implementation are necessary to deliver an attractive amenity space and assist with safeguarding the privacy of the neighbouring occupiers. Cycle storage is required in order to influence sustainable travel choices.
23. I have not included the Council's suggested condition relating to soil importation. This is unnecessary given the small extent of landscaping proposals. I have also not imposed a condition relating to contamination given the age and former use of the building, and the limited extent of development beyond the conversion works.

Conclusion

24. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal proposals would not be contrary to the development plan as a whole. As such, it is unnecessary to further consider the question of housing supply and presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in national policy, as this would not alter the outcome of my determination against the development plan. The appeal should therefore be allowed.

E Heron

INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings:

Site Location Plan dated 19.02.25

020 (Proposed Block Plan) dated 23.01.25

021 (Proposed GA Floor Plan Lower Ground Floor) Rev 2 dated 04.07.25

022 (Proposed GA Floor Plan Ground Floor) Rev 3 dated 28.07.25

023 (Proposed GA Floor Plan First Floor), Rev 2 dated 07.07.25

024 (Proposed GA Floor Plan Second Floor/Mezzanine) Rev 2 dated 07.07.25

025 (Proposed GA Roof Plan) dated 19.12.24

026 (Proposed Elevations) Rev 1 dated 07.07.25

027 (Proposed Front Elevation West) Rev 1 dated 07.07.25

028 (Proposed Side Elevation South) Rev 1 dated 07.07.25

029 (Proposed Rear Elevation East) Rev 1 dated 07.07.25

030 (Proposed Side Elevation North) Rev 1 dated 07.07.25

200 (Proposed Section) dated 19.12.24

3 Proposed Section BB Mezzanine Level - Unit 5) dated 19.12.24.

- 3) No development shall take place until a detailed drainage strategy / design, associated management / maintenance plan for the site has been submitted to and been approved in writing by the local planning authority. The drainage design should include:

- i) Surface water run-off rates, including greenfield Qbar and post development runoff estimates, ensuring greenfield rate run-off is matched, unless proven unfeasible, or 50% betterment for brownfield sites, with a restricted discharge rate not exceeding 5l/s per hectare and not lower than 2l/s per hectare.
- ii) Details of hydraulic design up to 1%AEP Storm Event in accordance with Gov.uk Climate Change Allowances.
- iii) Details of any boundary drainage to ensure any flooding remains within the site. If calculations show flooding on site, that developments/properties will be safe.
- iv) Designed in accordance with the drainage (Non-Statutory SuDS Technical Standards Guidance (2016) Paragraph 3.7).
- v) Provision of pipe diameters, slope angles, cover levels and invert levels.
- vi) Demonstrates that foul and surface water drain via separate systems.
- vii) Provision of hydraulic modelling for all storm durations, detailing the critical storm duration, from 15 minutes to 7 day, with the 1%AEP Storm Event also utilised.
- viii) Implementation of SuDS as the primary method of the management of surface water.
- ix) Provision of full management and maintenance schedule for the drainage strategy to cover the lifetime of the development, including contact details of the responsible party and any inspection and test plans.

The development should proceed in accordance with the approved documents and shall only be implemented and managed in accordance with the approved details.

- 4) No external works to the existing St Georges Street Baptist Church shall take place between 1st March and 31st August inclusive, unless preceded by a nesting bird survey undertaken by a competent ecologist no more than 48 hours prior to clearance. If nesting birds are present, an appropriate exclusion zone will be implemented and monitored until the chicks have fledged. No works shall be undertaken within exclusion zones whilst nesting birds are present.
- 5) No development involving the use of any facing or roofing materials shall take place until details of the materials to be used in the construction of external surfaces of the

development hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

- 6) Prior to the use of any building materials, a strategy for the incorporation of features to enhance the biodiversity value of the proposed development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The submitted strategy should include proposals for the provision of sparrow terraces (avoiding southern elevations), The features shall be installed in accordance with the approved details and retained thereafter.
- 7) a) The windows / parts of windows shown on the following plans shall remain obscurely glazed: 027 (Proposed Front Elevation West) Rev 1 dated 07.07.25, 028 (Proposed Side Elevation South) Rev 1 dated 07.07.25, 029 (Proposed Rear Elevation East) Rev 1 dated 07.07.25, 030 (Proposed Side Elevation North) Rev 1 dated 07.07.25.

b) The parts of the windows proposed as obscured on the plans referred to in 4 a), shall comprise of glazing to level of obscuration and style to match the existing obscure glazing found throughout the building.

c) The following windows shall be glazed using obscured glass to match the level of obscuration and style of the existing obscure glazing found throughout the building.
 - i. Windows serving the communal Open Plan Kitchen/Dining/Living room to the HMO on the Lower Ground Floor fronting and immediately adjacent to Grapes Street as shown on plans: 021 Rev 2 and 028 Rev 1.
The windows / parts of windows referred to in this condition shall be non-opening. All glazing shall be installed/retained in accordance with the approved details and shall be retained as such thereafter.
- 8) None of the units hereby approved shall be occupied until the 4 car parking spaces shown on plan ref: 020 (Proposed Block Plan) dated 23.01.25 have been provided and been made available for use by the future occupiers. These parking spaces shall be retained at all times thereafter.
- 9) Prior to first occupation of any of the development hereby approved, a scheme of landscaping shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall include details of boundary treatments, screening within the shared private amenity space, hard landscaping, planting plans, written specifications (including cultivation and other operations associated with tree, shrub, hedge or grass establishment), schedules of plants noting species, plant sizes, the proposed numbers and densities, and an implementation programme.
- 10) The approved landscaping plan shall be completed in accordance with the following:
 - a) All hard and soft landscaping works shall be completed in full accordance with the approved scheme within the first planting season following completion of the development hereby approved, or in accordance with a programme agreed with the Local Planning Authority.
 - b) All trees, shrubs and hedge plants supplied shall comply with the requirements of British Standard 3936, Specification for Nursery Stock. All pre-planting site preparation,

planting and post-planting maintenance works shall be carried out in accordance with the requirements of British Standard 4428(1989) Code of Practice for General Landscape Operations (excluding hard surfaces).

c) All new tree plantings shall be positioned in accordance with the requirements of Table A.1 of BS5837:2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction: Recommendations.

d) Any trees, shrubs or hedges planted in accordance with this condition which are removed, die, become severely damaged or become seriously diseased within five years of planting shall be replaced within the next planting season by trees, shrubs or hedging plants of similar size and species to those originally required to be planted.

11) Prior to the occupation of any of the hereby approved development, details of covered cycle storage proving 1 cycle space per residential unit, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The cycle storage shall be built and made available for use prior to the occupation of any of the hereby approved units and shall be retained thereafter.

--- End of Schedule ---