

Planning Statement

Redevelopment of Church hall and associated works
Cheadle Methodist Church, Charles Street, Cheadle
For Cheadle Methodist Church

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Hewitt & Carr Services Ltd. have been instructed by Cheadle Methodist Church to prepare a Planning Statement to accompany an application for the redevelopment of the existing church hall at Cheadle Methodist Church, Charles Street, Cheadle.
- 1.2. The works will comprise the removal of the existing church hall building, along with attached single storey buildings to the rear of the site that have previously been used as a nursery, and their replacement with a new extension to the existing Methodist Church.
- 1.3. The extension is to be used as a function room for community use, with ancillary kitchen and store, that being the same use as the existing church hall. The extension takes its design cues from the existing church hall but will be set further back into the site compared to the existing building.
- 1.4. The application also proposes the construction of a new first floor above the existing worship area within the main church building, which will provide a meeting room and a gallery that looks upon the ground floor worship area.
- 1.5. It is also proposed to create a new vehicular access into the site off Charles Street, to provide access to new on-site parking provision. Associated with those works are the provision of new areas of landscaping to enhance the appearance of the site.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1. The application site lies within the defined settlement boundary of Cheadle and comprises an irregularly shaped site that has a frontage with Chapel Street to its north, and a frontage with Charles Street to its southwest. The buildings are not statutorily listed but lie adjacent to the Cheadle Conservation Area.
- 2.2. The northern part of the building comprises the main area of worship, whilst the building to the southwest comprises a function room / hall, with associated facilities, along with a single storey building that was previously used as a children nursery. Commercial premises extend to the east and west of the site along Chapel Street, with the front elevation comprising predominantly of red/brown brick, with a projecting roof span above. The side elevations of the main church also comprise of red/brown brick with extensive high level glazing.
- 2.3. The function room / hall fronting onto Charles Street is constructed from red/orange facing brickwork and presents a dominant gable end to the streetscene, broken up by some vertically proportioned windows at ground floor level. Vertically proportioned windows also extend along its southeastern elevation. Single storey extension project off the northwestern, northern and eastern elevations of the function room building, Residential developments extend to the east and west along Charles Street.

3.0 PLANNING POLICY

- 3.1. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF confirms that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan for this area comprises the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) of which the following policies are of relevance to the determination of the application:
- 3.2. Policy SS1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Development Principles' and states that the Council will expect the development and use of land to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands in terms of delivering, in partnership with other agencies and services:
- a mix of types and tenures of quality, affordable homes, to meet the needs and aspirations of the existing and future communities
 - quality local services, including provision for education, healthcare, leisure, community, cultural and tourist facilities in response to anticipated population change and visitor numbers
 - easy access to jobs, shops and transport services by all sections of the community
 - increased economic prosperity and opportunities for employment and greater local capacity with an educated, skilled and flexible workforce
 - a healthy, safe, attractive, active, well-designed and well-maintained environment
 - development which maintains the locally distinctive character of the Staffordshire Moorlands, its individual towns and villages and their settings
 - development that is undertaken in a way that protects and enhances the natural and historic environment of the District and its surrounding areas, including the Peak District National Park, both now and for future generations.
- 3.3. Policy SS7 of the Local Plan relates to the 'Cheadle Area Strategy' and states that the Council and its partners will seek to expand the role of Cheadle as a significant service centre and a market town. This will be achieved through a number of actions, including:
- Providing additional educational, health and community facilities, including a new primary school to serve north Cheadle at the Donkey Lane site
 - Regenerating and improving the streetscape of the town centre and creating more public realm

- Promoting the role and historic character of the town, including the protection of heritage assets and its links with the Churnet Valley as a visitor destination.

3.4. Policy SD3 of the Local Plan relates to 'Sustainability Measures in Development' and states that the Council will support further carbon-saving or water-saving measures in both new and existing developments, in a number of ways, including:

- The Council will support measures designed to improve the sustainability of existing buildings (such as improved thermal insulation, water conservation, or the installation of micro-renewables)

3.5. Policy DC1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Design Considerations' and states that all development shall be well designed and reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to and complementing the special character and heritage of the area in line with the Council's Design SPD. In particular, new development should (amongst others):

- be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area
- be designed to respect the site and its surroundings and promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance
- create, where appropriate, attractive, functional, accessible and safe public and private environments which incorporate, amongst others, landscaping and designing out crime initiatives
- protect the amenity of the area, including residential amenity, including creation of healthy active environments and residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, visual impact, sunlight, outlook, privacy, soft landscaping, as well as noise, odour and light pollution
- provide for safe and satisfactory access and make a contribution to meeting the parking requirement arising from necessary car use

3.6. Policy DC2 of the Local Plan relates to 'The Historic Environment' and states that

1. The Council will conserve and where possible enhance heritage assets, including their setting in a manner appropriate to their significance. This will take into account the desirability of maintaining and enhancing their significance and will ensure that development proposals contribute positively to the character of the built and historic environment.
2. Protection will be given to designated heritage assets and their settings and non-designated heritage assets as set out in the NPPF.

3. All applications likely to affect heritage assets will require the submission of a heritage statement, including a qualitative visual assessment where appropriate.
 4. Where development is likely to affect archaeology, both designated and undesignated, the Council requires the submission of a desk based assessment, and where appropriate, field surveys and trench evaluation by a qualified professional.
 5. Where the loss of significance is unavoidable, recording should take place and this should be added to the Historic Environment Record as a minimum, held by Staffordshire County Council.
 6. The Council will continue its proactive approach to heritage assets at risk and welcomes development proposals which would result in the sympathetic reuse of these assets in line with NPPF policy.
 7. The Council will promote development which sustains, respects or enhances buildings and features which contribute to the character or heritage of an area and those interests of acknowledged importance through the use of Conservation Area Appraisals, Design Guidance and Statements, Archaeological Assessments, Characterisation Studies and Masterplanning.
- 3.7. Policy T1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Development and Sustainable Transport' and states that the Council will promote and support development which reduces reliance on the private car for travel journeys, reduces the need to travel generally and accommodates residual development traffic in line with the Integrated Transport Strategy. This will be achieved by:
1. Ensuring that all new development is located where the highway network can satisfactorily accommodate traffic generated by the development or can be improved as part of the development.
 2. Ensuring that major development is located in areas that are accessible by sustainable travel modes or can be made accessible as part of the proposal.
 3. Considering appropriate parking provision on a case by case basis with recourse to the parking guidance set out in Appendix 2.
 4. Where appropriate all new development shall facilitate walking and cycling within neighbourhoods and town centres, and link with or extend identified walking or cycling routes. In addition applicants should also consider how their schemes can enhance the existing path network in line with the Staffordshire County Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan and also give consideration to the protection of non-definitive public footpath routes in addition to definitive routes

4.0 MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.1. The National Planning Policy Framework seeks to secure the delivery of sustainable development and sets out guidance, *inter-alia*, in respect of securing high quality design, ensuring highway safety and safeguarding heritage assets. The content of the NPPF has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application and is discussed in more detail below.

5.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

- 5.1. The application proposes the erection of a replacement function room building and associated works on a site located within the defined settlement boundary of Cheadle. Policy SS1 of the Local Plan confirms the Local Authority's support for development that supports quality local services, including provision for education, community and cultural facilities in response to anticipated population change and visitor numbers. Policy SS7 of the Local Plan reflects the provisions of policy SS1, giving support to additional educational, health and community facilities within the Cheadle town area.
- 5.2. The submitted proposal entails the replacement of the existing buildings on the site, which are used as a function room for community use and associated facilities, along with an area previously utilised as a children's nursery. The application proposes the erection of a replacement function room building, also to be used for community use, along with associated facilities. The existing premises have poor thermal efficiency and are unviable, so the decision has been taken to replace the buildings with a new building, built to modern-day standards of construction. The proposed development will consequently derive a community facility of improved quality, and accords with the provisions of policies SS1, SS7 and SD3 of the Local Plan.

Design & Layout

- 5.3. Policy DC1 of the Core Strategy states that all development shall be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area. Proposals should also be designed to respect the site and its surroundings and promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance. The policy also requires developments to create safe and accessible environments, and protect the amenity of the area, including residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping.
- 5.4. As discussed within the accompanying Design & Access Statement, the existing building is in need of intervention, with the internal layout and finishes being outdated. The kitchen is old and tired, needing a refresh. The internal environment is cold and unwelcoming, deterring the community from gathering

in these spaces. The building can also be considered to be in poor condition, with old single glazed timber windows. Bricks also show signs of wear and damage. The existing parking area is small and uninviting, which is not successful in creating a welcoming communal hub. Overall, the church does not provide the required spaces that allow the community to come together, resulting in an unsuccessful use of the site.

- 5.5. The proposed development seeks to enhance the use and appearance of the site, and give it a new lease of life, with a meeting that meets modern standards of comfort and thermal insulation and provide a space where the community can thrive. The spaces have been created with a growing and diverse community in mind and will therefore future proof the building, and result in a form of development that can be used to its full potential within the community.
- 5.6. The proposed development takes its design cues from the existing function room building on the site, encompassing a dominant gable end with steeply pitching roof. The extension will encompass both contemporary and traditional values, recognising the building's evolution whilst respecting its historic integrity. Vertically proportioned windows are to be introduced within the new southeast elevation of the building, along with a glazed corner feature. Reclaimed bricks are to be used, thereby ensuring that the building will assimilate with its surroundings. A glazed link will connect the new building to the existing church building.
- 5.7. The new building is to be set back from the streetscene so will result in a change to the appearance of the site when viewed from Charles Street, but in doing so it enables a more welcoming entrance and landscaping to be introduced, enhancing the appearance of this part of the streetscene. The proposal also represents a substantial reduction in built development on the site, reducing the total footprint of 895.5 square metres down to 487.8 square metres. By resultant effect the development as a whole will be more spacious within its surroundings. The proposed development is consequently held to meet the requirements of policies SS1, SS7 and DC1 of the Local Plan in this regard.

Heritage Impact

- 5.8. The existing buildings are not statutorily listed, nor do they lie within the Cheadle Conservation Area. The site does however abut up to the southeastern boundary of the Conservation Area, and consequently a Heritage Statement has been prepared to accompany the application.
- 5.9. The Heritage Statement notes that the proposal will resemble the existing street elevation through its materials, but that it will be set back from Charles Street to provide a new entrance to the site, with the addition of landscaping to create a green corridor leading up to the entrance of the building.
- 5.10. The Heritage Statement concludes that the proposed alterations will not negatively impact the significance of the conservation area, noting that the scheme will be subservient to the surrounding buildings of Charles street and will

allow a more sympathetic entrance to the site. The extension will enhance the building aesthetically through the addition of glazing, including vertical windows and a feature corner window. The ridge height is sympathetic to the existing design, using the existing language of the site to tell a contemporary story.

- 5.11. Having regard to the conclusions of the Heritage Statement the submitted proposal is not considered likely to detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and consequently the proposal is held to meet the requirements of policy DC2 of the Local Plan.

Highway Safety

- 5.12. The application site at present has very limited parking provision, comprising of approximately three spaces that are accessed down the western side of the existing church hall. The access is narrow and does not have good visibility onto Chapel Street owing to the presence of the church to the east, and a high wall and adjacent building to its west. This existing parking area will be removed as part of the proposed development, as the new function room will project into the area where it is currently located.
- 5.13. The application proposes the formation of a new vehicular access into the site off Charles Street, with pedestrian access alongside. The access will be wide enough for two vehicles to pass one another and will have good visibility in both directions on egress. 3no. disabled spaces are to be provided to the northwest of the access, with a further 6no. regular parking spaces provided at the rear of the site where the existing former nursery buildings are located.
- 5.14. Owing to the provision of 9no. parking spaces, served via a new vehicular access, and the removal of the existing parking area will result in betterment to highway safety within the locality. The proposed development consequently derives no conflict with policy T1 of the Local Plan or paragraphs 110 and 111 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1. The submitted proposal amounts to an appropriate form of development within the town centre and will upgrade the existing site to provide a high quality cultural and community facility. The scale, massing, design and layout of the development will be in keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding area, and will not detract from the significance of the Cheadle Conservation Area as a heritage asset. The proposal will furthermore derive betterment to highway safety by removing the existing poor quality parking area, and providing much improved access and parking arrangements, including additional parking.
- 6.2. The proposed development is therefore in accordance with policies SS1, SS7, SD3, DC1, DC2 and T1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.