

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2024/0202
Valid 15/05/2024

**THE OLD CHAPEL BLAKELEY
LANE
DILHORNE**

**PROPOSED SECURITY GATES
TO ENTRANCE AND EXIT**

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle of development
- Design and visual impact
- Highways matters
- Coal development area (High risk)

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application site is The Old Chapel, Blakeley Lane Dilhorne. The building is no longer used for worship purposes and has recently secured planning consent for office use (SMD/2022/0586). The building is a detached, pitched roof structure constructed from red brick, stone cills and tiled roof. The Chapel occupies a visually prominent site at the side of Kingsley Road and is opposite the junction with the A522 Leek Road. The property benefits from off-road parking at the sides and rear with an 'in' / 'out' vehicular access/exit arrangement.

For the purposes of planning policy consideration, the application site is located within the open countryside and forms part of the Green Belt. The site is not within any Conservation Area and the chapel is not listed. There are no protected trees which need to be considered.

PROPOSAL

The application proposes inwards opening security gates to both the entrance and exit to the site. The gates would be 1.8m high from ground level, have solid lower sections and spindles within the upper panels. The plans confirm these would be aluminium gates (RAL 7016 – Anthracite) with a wood grain texture. No other boundary alterations are proposed.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan

SS1 Development Principles
SS10 Other Rural Areas Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
DC2 The Historic Environment
DC3 Landscape and Settlement Setting
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

Supplementary Planning Guidance

1. Design Principles for Development in the Staffordshire Moorlands.

Supplementary Planning Document

1. Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide

National Planning Policy Framework

Including sections:

- 2 Achieving sustainable development
- 6 Building a strong, competitive economy
- 9 Promoting sustainable transport
- 12 Achieving well-designed and beautiful places
- 13 Protecting Green Belt land
- 16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

SMD/2022/0586	Proposed change of use and alteration of former Methodist chapel to office use. Approved.
87/00713/OLD	Extension to form W.C and new septic tank. Approved.
83/12329/OLDDC	New roof to kitchen. Approved.
78/05782/OLDDC	Extension to existing car park. Approved.
77/04715/OLDDC	Construction of entrance porch. Approved.
77/04579/OLDDC	Extension to carpark and additional access onto the A52 Road at part of Mill House Farm, Dilhorne. Refused

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice. Expired.
Neighbour consultation period. Expired

Cheadle Town Council: Cheadle Town Council has no objections to this development, and would support the application in principle.

Officer Note:

The following consultation response from the council's Conservation Officer was based on the original submitted scheme. The plans have been amended since then. Unfortunately the Conservation officer has left the LPA and it has not been possible to secure additional detailed comments from her.

Conservation Officer: Objection. Whilst the scheme outlines a *need* for the intervention, there is no information about the building - or what the new boundary treatment will be other than 'sleek' 'modern' and 'subordinate'. It is not annotated on the plan whether the new treatment will be metal, timber, iron, steel, plastic or anything; less any additional information about colour, finish, durability etc. It is clear from the drawings that whatever is proposed will *not* be subordinate, and without any of the core pieces of information I cannot begin to consider this project and or provide guidance.

The former Methodist Church is in an exposed location on the junction at Kingsley Road to A522. It is not clear what survives of any of its original state, though it appears from preliminary its original name board may be the only thing remaining. It is not a listed building though does exhibit some qualities of the Leek vernacular. Looking at the location and proximity to the road, it is not clear what in terms of visibility splay or other practicality has been considered and the topography here appears to afford further access around the sides and back. It would be pertinent to understand what justification there is for such a 'modern' or 'sleek' boundary treatment, it currently appears to be totally unrelated to any context of the area, looking to completely board off the front of the entire site with the visual obtrusion something that of generic construction fencing or even very contemporary modern house type boundary walling. I question why traditional decorative railings and gate of a suitable height cannot be employed instead. Something like this would be more 'subordinate' and transparent, lighter in outward appearance and giving the desired criteria of need. Though again, with lack of any of the core elements to this project it is difficult to provide detailed advice.

Staffordshire County Council Highways

Recommendation Summary: Conditional

Site Visit Conducted on: 29-May-2024

1. Gates shall be set back a minimum of 5m rear of the carriageway edge and shall open inwards away from the highway in accordance with approved drawing GNC/24/117/1 B

Reason(s)

To comply with NPPF Paragraph 114; to comply with SMDC Local Plan Policy DC1; in the interests of highway safety.

Notes to Planning Officer

Application is for security gates.

Application was originally recommended for refusal by highways. Revised drawings have been submitted showing both sets of gates set back minimum of 5m from the carriageway edge. This addresses highways reason for refusal. Gates open inwards away from the highway. Gates located as proposed in the revised drawings will not affect the operation of the access and will have no effect on visibility. Current records show that there were no Personal Injury Collisions on Blakeley Lane within 160m either side of the property access in the previous five years.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development, Design and Visual Impact

The application site is located within the Green Belt but the proposal is not for a building and the scheme does not fall within the paragraph number 155 exceptions of 'Other forms of development.' The scheme is submitted as a result of recently securing change of use consent for the building to be used as an office. The Design and Access Statement provides the following information regarding why the gates are required.

Since moving into the premises in November 2023, the applicant has seen constant criminal/unwanted activity and trespassing on their property on a weekly basis, and sometimes more often. The property benefits from CCTV cameras with all required warning signage, but this has not deterred this unwanted activity. Examples of this activity is shown below.

- 1. Members of the public defecating/urinating at the rear of the property.*
- 2. Vehicles pulling onto the property to hide following criminal activity (reported to police).*
- 3. Vehicles using the rear of the property as a social car park in the evenings including drug and alcohol use (evidenced by litter left behind).*
- 4. Vehicles using the property to wait for other vehicles.*
- 5. Vehicles using the property to turn around.*
- 6. Drivers of vehicles and pedestrians suspiciously looking through windows and doors.*

Planning permission is required due to the gates being 1.8m high adjacent to the highway.

Since submission of the application, the plans have been amended. For the purposes of clarity it is the scheme detailed on drawing reference number GNC/24/117/1 Revision B as well as the two elevations plans entitled 'Opening 1' and 'Outside View' which are now being considered.

Amendments to the design of the gates have been made. Originally the gates were 1.8m high solid structures. The height still remains the same but the applicant has taken into consideration the Conservation officer's comments regarding design. The inclusion of spindles within the upper panels has reduced the solid appearance of the gates whilst still giving the applicant the same level of site security. The plans also now inform that although the gates will be aluminium, they will have a woodgrain texture. The anthracite grey colour choice is acceptable, a darker colour will blend in better with the surroundings. The low-level brick wall will remain in place as will the brick boundary wall which runs along the east and southern boundaries. Whilst the gates will be visually prominent, they will not completely mask views of the former chapel building. The new gates will only close off the existing accesses, no part of the proposal will extend in front of the gable end which faces directly onto the main road. Views from the south and east will remain unobstructed. For these reasons the proposal is considered to be acceptable in design and visual impact terms.

Highways matters

The County Highways officer originally objected to the plan as there was not a sufficient separation distance between the gates and the carriageway edge. The revised plan now demonstrates a 5.0m separation distance between the gates and the highway as well as them (gates) being inwards opening. The County Highways officer no longer objects to the proposal and recommends a condition in the event of planning permission being approved.

Coal

The application site lies within an area designated as a low-risk coal development area and as such this may be an area which contains unrecorded coal mining related hazards. It is recommended that in the event of planning permission being approved, that informative notes are added to the decision to remind/inform the applicant/developer of their responsibilities.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

For the reasons outlined within the report it is recommended that the application is approved subject to conditions and informative notes.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : Conditional approval

Case Officer: Lisa Jackson

Recommendation Date: 15.10.2024

X 

Signed by: Jane Colley Signature

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council