

Conservation Team Advice

Date: 1st May 2025
Application Ref: SMD/2025/0088
Site Address: Rudyard Methodist Church, Lake Road, Rudyard
Proposal: Proposed access ramp, replacement roof tiles and demolition of a chimney

Heritage assets affected:		
Designated Heritage Asset(s):	☒	Rudyard Conservation Area
Non-Designated Heritage Asset(s):	☐	

Conservation Advice

Summary of Significance

The proposal would be situated in Rudyard Conservation Area, which was designated for its origins as a reservoir constructed c.1797-1801 to feed the Caldon Canal. The area became popular for tourism from the mid-19th century through to the early-20th century after the development of Staffordshire Railway. The area's significance derives from its picturesque beauty with the lake as the focal point, large areas of vegetation and landscaping, historic associations with the development of the canal, popularity as a tourist destination in the Victorian and Edwardian period and collection of 19th century villas. Buildings are predominantly constructed in dark pink gritstone which adds to the quaint charm of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Rudyard Methodist Church dates c.1912 and was built to replace the former Wesleyan Methodist Chapel on Camrose Hill. The building is low-rise with Gothic-revival detailing including tracery on the gable end window. The building is identified as a positive building in the Conservation Area Appraisal (2016).

Assessment and Impact

The proposal would involve creation of a new ramp to the main entrance, removal of a chimney stack and re-roofing.

Access Ramp

The proposed ramp would be raised and would be enclosed by a stone edging and posts which would be no higher than 0.5m. As set out in the Design, Access and Heritage Statement, this enclosure to the ramp has been designed to mimic some of the parapet detailing elsewhere on the building. Whilst the ramp would be an overtly modern feature and would slightly intersect features on the principal elevation, the structure would be low-rise and simple in its design. It would not overbear or distract

from the architectural interest of the church and there is clear and convincing justification for it in terms of improving access to the building. The proposed elevation also indicates a simple metal handrail to the front elevation, which would be discreet and simple so as to not distract from the building's external appearance.

Roof works

The supporting information states that the works would involve replacing the red plain tiles with Staffordshire blue plain tiles. Red clay tiles were commonly used in the late-19th and early-20th century Gothic revival design of buildings. Nevertheless, the existing tiles have weathered to quite a dark appearance and Staffordshire blues and blue-grey slates are a common feature in the locality. Whilst this change in material would alter the appearance of the building, it would not be a harmful alteration and would likely blend in with the overall character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The proposed removal of the chimney would have a negligible impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area as this feature is not of high architectural value or decoration and there are limited views of it from the street.

Legislation and Policy

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The local planning authority should have a desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area (s.72).

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024

In determining applications, local authorities should take account of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation, the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality, the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness (par.210).

Any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within the setting), should require clear and convincing justification (par.213).

Where a proposed development would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use (par.215).

Local Development Framework

Consideration should also be given to the following documents and local development framework policies:

- Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (Adopted 2020) – DC2 The Historic Environment

- Rudyard Conservation Area Appraisal (2016)

Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall, the proposal would result in a very minor harmful impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area through the introduction of modern feature across the principal elevation. This would be contrary to s.72 of the Act. With reference to the planning policies, this would be 'less than substantial harm' to the designated heritage asset (par.215 of NPPF and policy DC2 of the local development framework), but at the lower end of the scale of harm. There is clear and convincing justification for this level of harm (par.213 of NPPF) in terms of improving access and the works have been sympathetically designed to the architectural interest of the building and surrounding Conservation Area. Therefore, there are no objections to the proposal from a conservation perspective.

For any consent granted, we would suggest the following conditions:

- Before the construction of the ramp hereby approved commences, samples of all new stone to be used shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out only in accordance with the agreed stone details.

Reason: To preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

- Before the re-roofing hereby approved commences, samples or detailed specifications of the new roof tile to be used shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out only in accordance with the agreed materials.

Reason: To preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Conservation Officer: Megan Atkinson