

**DECISION DELEGATED TO HEAD OF PLANNING**

**Application No:** H08-0166-25                      **Applicant:** L Smith  
**Proposal:** Change of use from Methodist Church to single dwelling  
**Location:** Gosberton Clough Methodist Church Beck Bank Gosberton Clough  
**Terminal Date:** 15th April 2025

**Planning Policies**

**South East Lincolnshire Local Plan - Adopted: March 2019**

01                      Spatial Strategy  
02                      Development Management  
03                      Design of New Development  
04                      Approach to Flood Risk  
11                      Distribution of New Housing  
17                      Providing a Mix of Housing  
28                      The Natural Environment  
36                      Vehicle and Cycle Parking  
APPENDIX 6                      Parking Standards

**National Guidance**

**National Planning Policy Framework December 2024**

**National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)**

Section 2 - Achieving sustainable development  
Section 4 - Decision-making  
Section 5 - Delivering and sufficient supply of homes  
Section 11 - Making effective use of land  
Section 12 - Achieving well-designed places  
Section 14 - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change  
Section 15 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

**National Guidance**

**Representations:**

	Object	Support	No Obj.	Comments
PARISH COUNCIL	0	0	0	1
WARD MEMBER	0	1	0	0
HIGHWAYS & SUDS SUPPORT	0	0	0	1

## **CASE OFFICER ASSESSMENT**

### **Description of Proposal**

The application seeks full planning permission to change the use of Gosberton Clough Methodist Church into a dwelling. No external alterations are proposed such as extensions or changes to the existing building elevations.

### **Site Description**

The site comprises land at Gosberton Clough Methodist Church, located to the north of Beck Bank. To the north is Traveller's Lodge and there are various dwellings located interspersed to the north-west of the site. The other nearest dwellings are located to the south, on the opposite side of Clough Road.

The site is outside any defined settlement boundary, as identified by the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011-2036 and accompanying policies map.

The site is mostly within Flood Zone 3, as identified by the Environment Agency's flood risk maps.

### **Relevant Planning History**

No planning applications have previously been submitted within the site.

### **Consultation Responses**

Responses have been received from the below referenced consultees. The responses are summarised below, however, the responses can be viewed in their entirety on South Holland District Council's website.

Gosberton Parish Council: No comments.

Cllr H J W Bingham: Although sad conversion of these buildings is about the only viable use rather than them falling in to decay.

Lincolnshire County Council - Highways and SUDS: No objections. The proposal is for a change of use from Methodist Church to single dwelling. The dwelling will have 4 bedrooms, there is sufficient space of site for parking and there are two access points existing where an in/out arrangement can be used. The proposal will result in a reduction in vehicle movements to those that could be produced by its former use. The proposal will not have an adverse impact on the public highway or surface water flood risk.

Cllr M A Geaney: No response received.

Cll J L King: No response received.

Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board: No response received.

Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust: No response received.

Natural England: No response received.

Ecology Officer: No response received.

Environmental Protection: No response received.

### **Public Representations**

This application has been advertised in accordance with the Development Procedure Order and the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. In this instance, no letters of representation have been received.

## **Key Planning Considerations**

### Development Plan

Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended, requires that the Local Planning Authority makes decisions in accordance with the adopted Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The adopted South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011-2036, adopted March 2019 (SELLP), is the development plan for the district, and is the basis for decision making in South Holland. The relevant development plan policies are detailed within the report above.

The policies and provisions set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, December 2024 (NPPF) are also a material consideration in the determination of planning applications, alongside adopted Supplementary Planning Documents.

There are no adopted Neighbourhood Plans for the area within which the site is located.

The main issues and considerations in this case include the following:

- Principle of Development;
- Visual and Amenity Impact;
- Highway Safety and Parking;
- Biodiversity; and
- Flood Risk.

These matters are assessed in turn below.

### Principle of Development

Policy 1 of the Local Plan sets out the settlement hierarchy in respect of delivering sustainable development, which meets the social and economic needs of the area whilst protecting and enhancing the environment; in order to provide enough choice of land for housing to satisfy local need, whilst making more sustainable use of land, and to minimise the loss of high-quality agricultural plots by developing in sustainable locations and at appropriate densities.

Policy 1 expresses this sustainable hierarchy of settlements, ranking the settlements deemed to be most sustainable in descending order. The most sustainable locations for development are situated within the 'Sub-Regional Centres', followed by 'Main Service Centres'. Lower down the hierarchy are areas of limited development opportunity including Minor Service Centres, with areas of development constraint comprising 'Other Service Centres and Settlements'. The countryside is at the bottom of the settlement hierarchy and represents the least sustainable location.

The site is outside any defined settlement limit and is therefore within the countryside in planning policy terms. Policy 1 sets out that within the countryside, development will be permitted that is necessary to such a location and/or where it can be demonstrated that it meets the sustainable development needs of the area in terms of economic, community or environmental benefits.

Policy 23 is also relevant in this case as this policy relates to the re-use of buildings in the countryside for residential use. Policy 23 sets out that proposals for the conversion of existing buildings which are located outside defined settlement boundaries to residential use will be permitted provided that criteria 1 to 5 are addressed:

1. the building is structurally sound and capable of conversion without the need for significant extension, alteration or rebuilding;
2. the building is of architectural or historic merit or makes a positive contribution to the character of the landscape, to justify conversion to ensure retention;
3. the proposal is in keeping with its surroundings;
4. the design is sympathetic to the character and appearance of the building in terms of architectural detailing and materials of construction; and

## 5. development leads to an enhancement of the immediate setting of the building

In terms of the above reference criteria, the existing building is considered to be structurally sound and capable of conversion. No external alterations are proposed. The proposal would result in a change to the character of the site to an extent by changing the use to residential. Given that only one dwelling would be created, it is considered that the impact of this would be acceptable on both the site and the area around the site.

The principle of the proposed development is therefore acceptable. This is however subject to a consideration as to whether the proposed development accords with the development plan and national policy in terms of other material considerations.

### Visual and Amenity Impact

Paragraph 135 of the NPPF, states that new development should function well and add to the overall quality of the area (including beyond the short term) and should be visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping. Paragraph 135 also states that development should create places that are safe, inclusive, and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Policy 2 of the Local Plan outlines sustainable development considerations for proposals; providing a framework for an operational policy to be used in assessing the sustainable development attributes of all development proposals.

Policy 3 of the Local Plan requires development to comprise good design; identifying issues that should be considered when preparing schemes so that development sits comfortably with, and adds positively to, its historically designated or undesignated townscape or landscape surroundings.

Policies 2 and 3 of the Local Plan set out that residential amenity and the relationship to existing development and land uses is a main consideration when making planning decisions.

As set out previously, no extensions or external alterations are proposed. The visual impact is therefore acceptable.

Only one dwelling is proposed and it is considered that the comings and goings would not be significant with one household living within the site. There are suitable separation distances between the proposed dwelling and the nearest dwellings to the site. The proposal therefore should not result in an unacceptable impact in terms of overlooking and the impact on the amenity or the nearest dwellings would be acceptable.

The proposed dwelling would provide sufficient internal living space and a large garden which should provide a suitable standard of living for future occupants.

The potential curtilage of the dwelling would be relatively large, and the site is relatively open to the surrounding area. It is therefore considered to be appropriate to restrict permitted development rights relating to outbuildings to ensure that any outbuildings that might be constructed in future are appropriately located and designed and do not encroach excessively over the site.

The proposal would not cause an adverse impact to the character or appearance of the area and would therefore accord with Policies 2 and 3 of the Local Plan and Section 12 of the NPPF.

### Highway Safety and Parking

Paragraph 116 of the NPPF sets out that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe, following mitigation.

Policy 2 of the Local Plan sets out that proposals requiring planning permission for development will be permitted provided that sustainable development considerations are met, specifically in relation to access and vehicle generation.

Policy 3 details that development proposals will demonstrate how accessibility by a choice of travel modes including the provision of public transport, public rights of way and cycle ways will be secured, where they are relevant to the proposal.

Policy 33 further reinforces the need for developments to be accessible via sustainable modes of transport.

Policy 36 of the Local Plan, in conjunction with Appendix 6, sets out minimum vehicle parking standards.

No changes to the vehicular access and there is sufficient room for parking within the site. Lincolnshire County Council's highways team have raised no objections to the proposed development, nor have they recommended any conditions or informatives.

The proposal would therefore have an acceptable impact in terms of highway safety and as such, the proposal would accord with Policies 2, 3, 33 and 36 of the Local Plan, as well as Section 9 of the NPPF.

### Biodiversity

Section 15 of the NPPF promotes the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment. Paragraphs 187 and 192 set out that sites of biodiversity value should be protected. Paragraph 187(d) for instance sets out that planning decisions should provide net gains for biodiversity.

Policies 28 and 31 of the Local Plan ensure the preservation and enhancement of the natural environment and that suitable mitigation and adaptation to the climate crisis is in place. Policy 28 also requires proposals to provide a net gain in biodiversity.

Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Environment Act 2021) introduced the requirement for applications to establish a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), demonstrated through standard units.

The application is accompanied by a biodiversity net gain exemption statement. The applicant considers that the proposed development would fall under the de minimis exemption. For example, no external alterations or extensions are proposed. The local planning authority agrees that the proposal falls under the de minimis exemption as no external alterations are proposed. The proposed development is therefore acceptable in terms of biodiversity and would therefore accord with Policies 28 and 31 of the Local Plan and Section 15 of the NPPF.

### Flood Risk

The site is mostly within Flood Zone 3, as identified by the Environment Agency's flood risk maps.

Paragraph 176 of the NPPF sets out that applications for a change of use do not need to pass the sequential and exception tests. The proposed development therefore is not required to pass these tests despite being within Flood Zone 3.

Paragraph 176 does however clarify that developments should still meet the requirements for site-specific flood risk assessments.

The South East Lincolnshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) provides an overview of how flood risk has been considered in shaping the proposals of the Local Plan, including the spatial strategy and the assessment of housing and employment sites. The site is not identified with a hazard area within the South East Lincolnshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) (2017). No specific flood risk mitigation is therefore necessary. The submitted Flood Risk Assessment recommends that the floor levels are raised to 0.3m above the typical surrounding ground level, however, as this is not specifically required by the SFRA it is not considered necessary to secure this via a condition. Furthermore, no external additions are proposed, and the development therefore would not alter the impermeable area within the site. The impact of the proposals on the local drainage network would therefore be minimal. The development therefore satisfactorily accords with Policy 4 in the Local Plan and Section 14 of the NPPF.

### **Planning Balance**

As detailed above, Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended, requires that the Local Planning Authority makes decisions in accordance with the adopted Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The proposed

development is appropriate and would not materially harm the character or appearance of the locality, or the amenity of nearby residents. The development is acceptable in terms of highway safety and overall the proposed development accords with the Local Plan and the NPPF.

## **Additional Considerations**

### Public Sector Equality Duty

In making this decision the Authority must have regard to the public sector equality duty (PSED) under s.149 of the Equalities Act. This means that the Council must have due regard to the need (in discharging its functions) to:

A. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.

B. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. This may include removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic; taking steps to meet the special needs of those with a protected characteristic; encouraging participation in public life (or other areas where they are underrepresented) of people with a protected characteristic(s).

C. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The PSED must be considered as a relevant factor in making this decision but does not impose a duty to achieve the outcomes in s.149. It is only one factor that needs to be considered, and may be balanced against other relevant factors.

It is not considered that the recommendation in this case will have a disproportionately adverse impact on a protected characteristic.

### Human Rights

In making a decision, the Authority should be aware of and take into account any implications that may arise from the Human Rights Act 1998. Under the Act, it is unlawful for a public authority such as South Holland District Council to act in a manner that is incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights. The Authority is referred specifically to Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (protection of property).

It is not considered that the recommendation in this case interferes with local residents' right to respect for their private and family life, home and correspondence, except insofar as it is necessary to protect the rights and freedoms of others (in this case, the rights of the applicant). The Council is also permitted to control the use of property in accordance with the general public interest and the recommendation is considered to be a proportionate response to the submitted application based on the considerations set out in this report.

## **Conclusion**

Taking these factors into consideration, the proposal accords with Policies 1, 2, 3, 4, 17, 28 and 36 of the Local Plan, as well as Sections 9 and 12 of the NPPF. There are no significant factors in this case that would outweigh the benefits of the proposal; therefore, the planning balance is in favour of the proposal.

## **Recommendation**

Based on the assessment detailed above, it is recommended that the proposal should be approved under Delegated Authority.