

DECISION DELEGATED TO HEAD OF PLANNING

Application No: H12-0949-25 **Applicant:** South Lincs Methodist Church

Proposal: Change of Use, Conversion & Extension to Create a Single Dwelling

Location: Lutton Marsh Methodist Church Guys Head Road Lutton Marsh

Terminal Date: 2nd December 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
10	Meeting Assessed Housing Requirements
11	Distribution of New Housing
17	Providing a Mix of Housing
23	The Reuse of Buildings in the Countryside for Residential Use
28	The Natural Environment
29	The Historic Environment
36	Vehicle and Cycle Parking
APPENDIX 6	Parking Standards

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework December 2024

Section 2 - Achieving sustainable development
 Section 4 - Decision-making
 Section 9 - Promoting sustainable transport
 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

Representations:

	Object	Support	No Obj.	Comments
PARISH COUNCIL	0	0	0	0
WARD MEMBER	0	0	0	0
PLANNING LIAISON	0	0	0	1

OFFICER - FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT				
HIGHWAYS & SUDS SUPPORT	0	0	0	1
SOUTH HOLLAND INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD	0	0	0	1
SHDC INTERNAL	1	0	0	1
OTHER STATUTORY BODIES	0	0	0	1

CASE OFFICER ASSESSMENT

Proposal

This is a full planning application seeking permission for the change of use and conversion, including the extension of the built form, to create a single residential dwelling at Lutton Marsh Methodist Church, Guys Head Road, Lutton Marsh.

A notably large extension has been proposed within this submission to allow for a conversion to take place. The extension would project from the rear elevation by 6500mm and from the side by 4200mm, to have a total length of 10500mm. The height of the extension proposed would be 5900mm (ridge), with an eaves height of 4000mm.

It should be noted that the site has been subject to a previous proposal on site, which was subsequently refused by the Local Planning Authority.

Site Description

The site is located outside any defined settlement boundary and is therefore in the countryside, as outlined in the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan, 2019 (SELLP). The site is set in a predominantly rural area, surrounded by large open agricultural fields, with a small number of residential dwellings in the immediate area.

The site comprises Lutton marsh Methodist Church, which was constructed in 1936, as a replacement for an earlier Primitive Methodist Chapel in Holbeach. The furniture from the original church in Holbeach, was taken and re-used for this 'new' church. Following the opening, a service was held later that year.

History

H12-0560-25 - Change of use, conversion and extension to create a single dwelling - Refused.

Consultation Responses

South Holland Internal Drainage Board

Byelaw 3 - Consent may be required.

Section 23, Land Drainage Act 1991 - Consent not currently required.

Byelaw 10 - Not Applicable.

Environment Agency

Thank you for consulting us on the above application, on 15 October 2025.

Environment Agency Position:

The proposed development will only meet the National Planning Policy Framework's requirements in relation to flood risk if the following planning condition is included.

Condition:

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted flood risk assessment dated May 2025, ref: 'ECL1545/G R MERCHANT LTD', prepared by Ellingham Consulting Ltd and the following mitigation measures it details:

- The dwelling shall have a minimum of two storeys.

These mitigation measures shall be fully implemented prior to occupation and subsequently shall be retained thereafter throughout the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To reduce the risk of flooding to the proposed development and future occupants in accordance with Policy 4 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011-2036.

Lincolnshire County Council Highways Authority

Recommendation for No objection subject to conditions:

No Objections

Having given due regard to the appropriate local and national planning policy guidance (in particular the National Planning Policy Framework), Lincolnshire County Council (as Highway Authority and Lead Local Flood Authority) has concluded that the proposed development would not be expected to have an unacceptable impact upon highway safety or a severe residual cumulative impact upon the local highway network or increase surface water flood risk and therefore does not wish to object to this planning application.

Comments:

Change of Use, Conversion & Extension to Create a Single Dwelling. The parking demonstrated is acceptable, a new access will be constructed, and it shall be to Lincolnshire County Council Specification as detailed on the proposed site plan. In order to maintain visibility for the users of the site and the users of the public highway, the height of the proposed front boundary hedge shall be no higher than 0.6m and a condition is requested. The proposal will not have an adverse impact on the public highway.

As Lead Local Flood Authority, Lincolnshire County Council is required to provide a statutory planning consultation response with regard to drainage and surface water flood risk on all Major applications. This application is classified as a Minor Application and it is therefore the duty of the Local Planning Authority to consider the surface water flood risk and drainage proposals for this planning application.

Planning Conditions:

In the event that permission is to be given, the following planning conditions should be attached:

Highway Condition:

The proposed boundary treatment shall not exceed 0.6 metres above the edge of the adjacent carriageway.

Reason: So that drivers intending entering the highway at the access may have sufficient visibility of

approaching traffic to judge if it is safe to complete the manoeuvre.

Informatives:

Highway Informative 03

The permitted development requires the formation of a new/amended vehicular access. These works will require approval from the Highway Authority in accordance with Section 184 of the Highways Act. Any traffic management required to undertake works within the highway will be subject to agreement. The access must be constructed in accordance with a current specification issued by the Highway Authority. Any requirement to relocate existing apparatus, underground services, or street furniture because of the installation of an access will be the responsibility, and cost, of the applicant and must be agreed prior to a vehicle access application. The application form, costs and guidance documentation can be found on the Highway Authority's website, accessible via the following link: <https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/licences-permits/apply-dropped-kerb>.

Highway Informative 08

Please contact the Lincolnshire County Council Streetworks and Permitting Team on 01522 782070 to discuss any proposed statutory utility connections, Section 50 licences and any other works which will be required within the public highway in association with the development permitted under this Consent. This will enable Lincolnshire County Council to assist in the coordination and timings of these works. For further guidance please visit the Highway Authority's website via the following link: Traffic Management - <https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/traffic-management>

Conservation Officer

I write to confirm my objection to this application.

The Methodist Chapel is a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA), as a result of being included as a building of historic interest in the Lincolnshire HER, under reference ML1127520.

Paragraph 216 of the NPPF confirms the following:

"The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset."

Moreover, Policy 29 of the SELLP confirms in its preliminary text;

"To respect the historical legacy, varied character and appearance of South East Lincolnshire's historic environment, development proposals will conserve and enhance the character and appearance of non-designated heritage assets, and their settings through high-quality sensitive design."

In this instance, the proposed rear and side extension to form the bulk of the proposed residency would fundamentally alter the character of the building and is of such a scale as it would almost entirely crowd out appreciation of the original building. Per para. 216 of the NPPF above, a balanced judgement regarding the scale of harm is required. In this instance, I consider that the proposal neither conserves nor enhances the NDHA or its setting and therefore that the harm to the original building to be so complete as to represent grounds for refusal, such is its weight in the balance.

Extensions to an NDHA such as this should seek to be much reduced in scale or bear as lightweight an impact upon what original structure remains on site. This may, for instance, take the form of a form of construction to the side(s) of the extant building with a glazed link offering visual demarcation between the extant and the new.

I cannot support the proposal as it currently stands.

Lincolnshire County Council Historic Places

Thank you for consulting us on this application.

The proposed development will comprise 'Change of Use, Conversion & Extension to Create a Single Dwelling'. This includes alterations to the interior and exterior.

It is noted that the applicant has not yet provided an assessment of the archaeological or heritage potential of the site, as outlined in the NPPF (paragraph 207).

The Methodist Church is a non-designated heritage asset included within the HER (Historic Environment record): Building record MLI127520 - Lutton Marsh Methodist Church was built at the western end of Guy's Head Road in 1936. It was constructed as a replacement for an earlier Primitive Methodist Chapel, located at Edinburgh Walk in Holbeach (see MLI127519). This new church was designed by the architect A.E. Palmer of Spalding, and was funded by the sale of the previous chapel. The pulpit, pews and furniture from the Edinburgh Walk chapel were taken to be re-used in the new church. A service to mark the opening of the new building was held on Wednesday the 28th of October 1936, following an earlier stone-laying ceremony, conducted by Sir Richard Winfrey J.P. only a few weeks prior. The building is single-storey, and constructed of red brick with a pitched slate roof.

Methodist churches like this one have been central to their communities, serving as places of worship and fostering faith, fellowship, and belonging. This chapel's significance goes beyond architecture; it reflects the important role of faith in shaping the community's spiritual and social lives.

The church holds value locally as a place of worship and for its broader heritage significance. It appears on the Ordnance Survey First Series 1:25,000 1937-1961 historical maps, highlighting its long-standing presence. Beyond worship, churches like this were community hubs, hosting important events, making them valuable heritage assets for future generations.

Recommendation:

I recommend that if permission is granted, there be a condition for a mitigation strategy to effectively deal with this site.

This will comprise a phased programme of recording including, but not limited to, a level 3 historic building recording of the Methodist Church, in accordance with Historic England's document 'Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice'. This will enable the Methodist Church to be recorded prior to the change of use. This should be secured by South Holland District Council's standard condition AR04 and is in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 207 and 218 and the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (Policy 29).

Finally, considering the building significance, the SHDC Conservation officer must be consulted before a decision is made.

With respect to the attached archaeological condition, please contact the Historic Places team at Lincolnshire County Council, Lancaster House, 36 Orchard Street, Lincoln, LN1 1XX, 07386 656079, email ruben.lopez@lincolnshire.gov.uk to discuss the requirements and request preparation of a brief for the works.

It is recommended the resulting written schemes of investigation for HBR are approved by the LCC Historic Environment Officer prior to formal submission to the Local Planning Authority.

South Holland District Council Environmental Protection

I request a standard land contamination condition be applied at this location.

Public Representation

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

The main issues and considerations in this case are (but are not limited to):

- Principle of Development and Sustainability
- Layout, Design and Impact on the Character of the Area
- Heritage Considerations
- Impact on Neighbouring Residents/Land Users/Land Uses
- Highway Safety and Parking
- Flooding Risk Considerations and Drainage
- Biodiversity

Evaluation

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.

In this case, the adopted South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011-2036, adopted March 2019, forms 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 (updated December 2024) are also a material consideration in the determination of planning applications, alongside adopted Supplementary Planning Documents.

The Authority is able to demonstrate a supply of deliverable sites equivalent to in excess of 5 years through the latest Housing Land Supply Assessment.

Planning Considerations

Principle of Development and Sustainability

The South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019) sets out the settlement hierarchy in respect of delivering sustainable development that 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 housing need, whilst making more sustainable use of land and to minimise the loss of high-quality agricultural land by developing in sustainable locations and at appropriate densities.

Policy 1 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019) sets out a spatial strategy for delivering sustainable development across South East Lincolnshire to 2036. Policy 1 (Spatial Strategy) expresses this sustainable framework 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 in respect of sustainable development 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 National Planning Policy Framework, (NPPF) (December 2024) outlines, within Paragraph 61, that "To support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay".

Para 73 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) also emphasises the importance that the contribution of small to medium sized sites can make in meeting the housing requirements. This states that "Small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, are essential for Small and Medium Enterprise housebuilders to deliver new homes, and are often built-out relatively quickly". This policy seeks to ensure that there is a sufficient supply of homes and advises that sites of all sizes make a contribution to the housing requirement of an area.

The application site in this instance lies outside of any of the clearly identified settlement boundaries, as specified within Policy 1. Policy 1 states that "the rest of the Local Plan area outside

the defined settlement boundaries of the Sub-Regional Centres, Main Service Centres, Minor Service Centre and Other Service Centres and Settlements is designated as Countryside".

As the site is located outside of any define settlement limit, as defined within the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019), it is therefore regarded as being within the countryside in policy terms. As such, the application site falls to be assessed as a 'Countryside' location, as detailed by this spatial policy.

Development within the countryside is limited to that where it "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". In this instance, the support towards the 'sustainability needs for the area' afforded by the proposal have not been put forward and in this instance, are not considered to be sufficient as to accord with Policy 1.

Independent dwellings within the open countryside, which do not meet a specific housing need as illustrated within the supporting context of Policy 1, would therefore typically be resisted in principle.

The policy justification to Policy 1 provides further guidance in regard to the types of development that may be considered necessary for such a countryside location. This states that "housing needs may also, by exception, be justified in the Countryside; for example, for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation (Policy 20: Accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople) or to meet the specific housing settlement needs of a settlement (see Policy 19: Rural Exceptions Sites)".

The application site comprises an existing building, in the form of a Methodist Church, and the proposal does not seek to provide accommodation for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople, nor does the proposal seek to address/meet the specific housing needs of a settlement; instead, seeking permission for a private dwellinghouse. As such, neither Policy 19 or Policy 20 are relevant in this instance, and the proposal does not seek to provide development that would necessitate a countryside location in that regard.

In light of the above, a proposal that seeks an independent private residential dwelling within the countryside would therefore typically be resisted in principle.

Notwithstanding the above, Policy 23 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan relates to the 'Reuse of Buildings in the Countryside for Residential Use' and as such, is relevant to this proposal.

Paragraph 84 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) outlines that "Planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting".

Within the context of South Holland, the suitability of a proposal for the re-use of a building in the Countryside is contained in Policy 23.

As such, in this instance the application must be assessed against Policy 23. This assessment can be found below.

Policy 23 - Reuse of Buildings in the Countryside for Residential Use

Policy 23 relates to 'The Reuse of Buildings in the Countryside for Residential Use'. This policy relates to proposals that are for the conversion of existing buildings, which are located outside defined settlement boundaries, to residential use; and outlines that these proposals will be permitted provided that they meet set requirements outlined in the policy. It should be noted that all criteria must be satisfied. These criteria are as follows:

- "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".

It is worth noting that if permission is granted permitted development rights may be removed to allow the LPA to control future alterations or extensions that may have an impact on the appearance and character of the surrounding area.

The Reasoned Justification associated with this policy explains the rationale and aims of Policy 23. Paragraph 5.15.3 states:

"Rural buildings, such as brick-built barns, can make a significant contribution to the character of an area and so there is a concern that they should not remain vacant, under-used or become derelict, detracting from the visual character and quality of the designated Countryside. Policy 23 therefore makes provision for the conversion and reuse of rural buildings as dwellings. South East Lincolnshire's stock of traditional and historic buildings is a finite resource and so conversions provide the opportunity to retain and enhance the architectural quality and character of the building and its setting."

This is expanded upon by Paragraphs 5.15.4 and 5.15.5, which are copied below for context:

"5.15.4: However, not all buildings in the Countryside are suitable for conversion as they may be of insubstantial construction, of poor design or not in keeping with their surroundings. Buildings to be converted should be structurally sound and proposals which require significant extension, alteration or rebuilding will be not acceptable. Structural surveys may be required in order to demonstrate that a building is structurally sound. Proposals which would involve rebuilding, rather than conversion, will be regarded as new dwellings in the Countryside and will not be permitted."

"5.15.5: Proposals will be required to be sympathetic to the character and appearance of the building in terms of architectural detailing and materials of construction in order to conserve its interest. They should also seek to optimise the potential to enhance the character and quality of the site. In terms of vehicular access, proposals should meet the requirements of the Highways Authority."

The aims of Policy 23 can therefore be broadly outlined as the retention and enhancement of buildings of architectural, or historical merit, in the Countryside.

In this regard, the following can be considered and assessed against the above criteria, in relation to this proposal.

Criteria 1 - A structural survey has not been provided as part of this application, and therefore, the LPA are unable to refer to such evidence to establish the acceptability of the proposal in this regard, in respect of the buildings structural standard. During the case officers site visit; albeit not a guarantee of the buildings structural integrity, the building appeared to be fairly structurally sound.

In any case, criteria 1 of Policy 23 requires the building that is to be converted, to be structurally sound and "capable of conversion without the need for significant extension, alteration or rebuilding". It is considered that the building is incapable of an appropriate conversion, without the need for a significant extension and alteration.

The Environment Agency have been consulted and have raised comments on this application, recommending a condition be attached to the decision notice as a result of the high flood risk on site. These comments outlined that the dwelling must have a minimum of two storeys to be acceptable from a flood risk perspective and have been requested given the site lies within Flood Zone 3 and within an area defined, within the SFRA maps, as 'Danger for All', with a peak depth of greater than 2.0m. The site therefore constitutes the highest danger level and highest flood depths within the SFRA maps.

As such, in order for the proposed conversion to a residential dwelling to be acceptable, the existing church must be extended as to create a first floor. Whilst this has been proposed in this instance, such development would constitute a 'significant extension, alteration or rebuilding' and as such, would fail to accord with criteria 1 of Policy 23.

It should also be noted that the proposal also incorporates an extension to the rear of the existing built form, in order to offer the first floor accommodation. This extension is sizeable, and would amount to a 'significant extension and alteration, comprising a projection from the rear elevation by 6500mm and from the side by 4200mm, to have a total length of 10500mm. The height of the extension proposed would be 5900mm (ridge), with an eaves height of 4000mm.

The proposed extension would comprise a significant scale and bulk, and is a necessity for the proposal to be acceptable in flood risk terms; meaning it would not be capable of conversion without the need for a significant extension. Whilst this has been reduced in comparison to the previously refused scheme, the reduced proposal still amounts to a sizeable and significant extension and alteration.

The height has been reduced by 1100mm (7000mm to 5900mm) and the eaves by 300mm (4300mm to 4000mm). The overall size of the extension would be around 68sqm, whilst the existing floor space of the church is only 70sqm; which further reinforces the point that the extension proposes a significant increase, as it seeks to enlarge the building by almost the same size as the existing built form. Without this extension, the church is not able to be converted; therefore, the proposal fails to meet criteria 1.

Criteria 2 - The Methodist Church is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA) and as such, is considered to be of historic merit; given its age and history.

Lincolnshire County Council Historic Places commented on the application and discussed the importance of the building. The comments received detailed that:

'Methodist churches like this one have been central to their communities, serving as places of worship and fostering faith, fellowship, and belonging. This chapel's significance goes beyond architecture; it reflects the important role of faith in shaping the community's spiritual and social lives.'

'The church holds value locally as a place of worship and for its broader heritage significance. It appears on the Ordnance Survey First Series 1:25,000 1937-1961 historical maps, highlighting its long-standing presence. Beyond worship, churches like this were community hubs, hosting important events, making them valuable heritage assets for future generations.'

As is addressed within the comments raised by the Historic Places Team, and SHDC's Conservation officer, the Methodist Church is a non-designated heritage asset included within the HER (Historic Environment record): Building record MLI127520.

The building evidently has historic merit and therefore accords with criteria 2 of Policy 23; albeit, concerns are raised below, regarding the impact of the proposed development upon this non-designated heritage asset.

Criteria 3 - Criteria 3 relates to the impact of the proposal and whether the proposal is in keeping with the surrounding area. The application site lies within a fairly rural setting, and as such, there are minimal dwellings in close proximity to the site.

Notwithstanding this, there are a selection of dwellings within the wider vicinity. Whilst this in itself does not allow for the proposal to be viewed favourably, in respect of Policy 23, and given that the use of the site as a church in itself is somewhat of an oddity within this location due to it comprising a rural and agricultural nature, the proposal to form a residential dwelling (with the exception of the unacceptable additions as to be addressed further within the report) would accord with criteria 3 in this instance.

Criteria 4 - Criteria 4 details "the design is sympathetic to the character and appearance of the building in terms of architectural detailing and materials of construction." The proposed extensions are not sympathetic and would not retain and enhance the building's character, resulting in the proposal also conflicting with criteria 4 of Policy 23.

As outlined above, the extension would be of a significant scale and would therefore be seen as a harmful addition that is deeply unsympathetic to the character and appearance of the modest church. The extension would dominate the building and thus cause harm in this regard.

As referenced above, the building is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset and as such, further emphasis should be drawn towards this criteria and the need for a sympathetic and appropriate design.

As raised by SHDC's Conservation officer "Extensions to an NDHA such as this should seek to be much reduced in scale or bear as lightweight an impact upon what original structure remains on

site". In this instance, "the proposed rear and side extension to form the bulk of the proposed residency would fundamentally alter the character of the building and is of such a scale as it would almost entirely crowd out appreciation of the original building".

The proposal would therefore fail to be sympathetic to the character and appearance of the building, and would fail to accord with criteria 4.

Criteria 5 - The existing church is of a suitable and appropriate character, and whilst the building may not be utilised substantially for its purpose, the building, as referenced throughout this report, offers a positive built form that has historic merit.

Notwithstanding this, it is accepted that a conversion, should this comprise a suitable sympathetic and non-extensive design, could bring the building into a more active and viable use; and as such could have the potential to lead to a minor enhancement/improvement of the immediate setting.

However, in this instance, the proposal fails to put forward a scheme that would enhance the immediate setting.

The extension is considered to be excessively large and therefore unacceptable, and it is viewed that if such an enlargement and design were to be approved and constructed, it would dominate the existing building and take away from the setting.

The proposal in this instance is considered to be detrimental and harmful to the setting and surrounding area, and as such, evidently fails to accord with criteria 5 of Policy 23.

Beyond the assessment of the criteria outlined above, it is important to note that whilst two applications for similar developments have been referenced within the planning statement as justification to support this proposal, they are significantly different and therefore cannot be assessed in the same capacity.

Firstly, H09-0697-24 was located inside the settlement boundaries of Holbeach Drove and featured no extension and although H08-0166-25 was located outside any defined settlement, it also did not feature an extension. Therefore, neither property were to be significantly extended which remains the main issue in this regard as the building is not capable of conversion without the need for significant extension and alterations. In addition, the built form subject to this proposal is a non-designated heritage asset.

In any case, each application must be considered on their own merits.

To conclude, the proposal therefore fails to accord with criteria 1, 4 and 5 of Policy 23.

As a result, the principle of development is not considered to be acceptable, and the proposal is contrary to Policy 1 and Policy 23 of the South East Lincolnshire local Plan (2019).

Layout, Design and Consideration of the Character and Appearance of the Area and Heritage Consideration

Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) specifically relates to 'Achieving well-designed places' and details that the "creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve" and as such, it is generally accepted that good design plays a key role towards sustainable development.

Paragraph 135, contained within Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024), states that new development should function well and add to the overall quality of the area (beyond the short term and over the lifetime of the development) and should be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate landscaping. This goes on to establish that it is important that new development should be of the highest quality to enhance and reinforce good design characteristics, and that decisions must have regard towards the impact that the proposed development would have on local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting such as topography, street patterns, building lines, boundary treatment and through scale and massing.

Development proposals should also ensure that developments 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, among other considerations.

Likewise, Policy 2 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019) outlines sustainable development considerations for development proposals, providing a framework for an operational policy to be used in assessing the sustainable development attributes of all development proposals. Furthermore, Policy 3 accords with the provisions of Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024), in that it 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.

These policies accord with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) and require that design which is inappropriate to the local area, or which fails to maximise opportunities for improving the character and quality of an area, will not be acceptable.

Proposals for new development would therefore require the aforementioned considerations to be adequately assessed and designed, including the siting, design and scale to be respectful of surrounding development and ensure that the character of the area is not compromised.

In addition to this, Lutton Marsh Methodist Church is considered to hold historic value and is considered a Non-Designated heritage Asset (NDHA). The buildings holds value locally as a place of worship and for its broader heritage significance. This has been reiterated to the LPA by both Lincolnshire County Council Historic Places Team and the South Holland District Council Conservation Officer; whose comments can be seen above.

In this regard, Policy 29 (The Historic Environment) states amongst other matters that the distinctive elements of the South East Lincolnshire historic environment will be conserved and, where appropriate, enhanced, in keeping with the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024). Development proposals will expected to conserve and enhance the character and appearance of designated and non-designated heritage assets, including archaeology, historic buildings, conservation areas, scheduled monuments, street patterns, streetscapes, landscapes, parks (including Registered Parks and Gardens), river frontages, structures and their settings through high-quality sensitive design.

In assessing proposals of this nature, given the building being classed as an NDHA, the Local Planning Authority must ensure special regard to preserving the asset in relation to Paragraph 216 of the NPPF.

The NPPF expresses the importance of considering the impact of development on the significance of designated heritage assets; advising that development and alterations to designated assets and their settings can cause harm. These policies ensure the protection and enhancement of the historic buildings and environments. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance should be treated favourably.

Paragraph 216 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) relates to non-designated heritage assets and details that "the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset".

The proposal, for the conversion of the building to form a dwelling, comprises a significant extension protruding from the rear elevation, whilst also extending visually beyond the side of the existing built form, which would create an additional floor space of 68sqm.

The extant church, in its current form, has an internal floor space of 70sqm and as such, the extension proposed would enlarge the building by almost the same size as the existing church itself.

The extension would project from the rear elevation by 6500mm, and 4200mm from the side; whilst having a total length of roughly 10500mm. Further to this, the extension would create an additional floor for habitation and would therefore sit notably above the existing ridge height of the church; albeit at a lower height than the previously refused scheme on site. The height of the extension sits at around 5900mm with the eaves being 4000mm.

Although the height has been lowered, the proposed extension would still fail to appear subservient or subordinate and paired with the significant bulk of the extension, it is considered to be constitute a harmful addition; taking away from the existing design of the building, which holds historic value. As outlined in the previous report, the proposed design is adversely obtrusive and offensive and is therefore at direct conflict with the SELLPs design policies and would cause impact to the overall character of the area.

The historic value placed on the Methodist Church, as a NDHA, also raises further concerns with regard to the proposed design and scale.

The SHDC Conservation Officer has been consulted and outlined that *'the proposed rear and side extension to form the bulk of the proposed residency would fundamentally alter the character of the building and is of such a scale as it would almost entirely crowd out appreciation of the original building'*. This goes on to assess the proposal against Paragraph 216 of the NPPF regarding a balanced judgement being needed in relation to the scale of harm. The Conservation officers comments discuss that the proposed scheme neither conserves nor enhances the NDHA or its setting, which ultimately causes harm to the original building and recommends refusal.

The LPA are of the opinion that any extension to an NDHA *'should seek to be much reduced in scale or bear as lightweight an impact upon what original structure remains on site'*. As expected, the Conservation Officer concludes that they cannot support the proposal as it currently stands.

As such, in this regard, the proposal would fundamentally alter the character of the building, and is of such a scale as to create a resultant form that would almost entirely 'crowd out' appreciation of the original building. The scheme neither conserves nor enhances the non-designated heritage asset or its setting, which conflicts with Paragraph 216 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Taking account of the design and scale of the development, as detailed above, the proposal is considered to be unacceptable. The proposal would cause an adverse impact to the character or appearance of the area and would fail to preserve or enhance the NDHA; and would therefore fail to accord with Policies 2, 3 and 29 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019) and Section 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024).

Impact on Residential Amenity/ Land Users

Paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) 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; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

Policies 2 and 3 of South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019) sets out that residential amenity and the relationship to existing development and land uses is a main consideration when making planning decisions.

The closest residential dwelling in relation to the site is 84m to the west, this is therefore considered to be a more than adequate separation distance which ensures that there should be no material overshadowing or overlooking following the conversion of the church and construction of the extension. Despite the fairly large size of the extension, due to the minimal number of dwellings nearby and aforementioned distance, it should also not be overbearing in this instance either.

As detailed above, the scale and design of the proposal is considered to be such that there would be no significant or unacceptable impact on the residential amenities of the occupiers of adjacent properties or land users, when also taking account of the conditions recommended. As such, the proposal is considered to accord with the provisions of the Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024), and Policies 2 and 3 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019).

Flood Risk and Drainage

Section 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) explains that "Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk (whether existing or future). Where development is necessary in

such areas, the development should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere".

This goes on to state, within Paragraph 172, that all plans "should apply a sequential, risk-based approach to the location of development - taking into account all sources of flood risk and the current and future impacts of climate change - so as to avoid, where possible, flood risk to people and property. They should do this, and manage any residual risk, by: a) applying the sequential test and then, if necessary, the exception test as set out below".

Paragraph 173 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) goes on to state that "A sequential risk-based approach should also be taken to individual applications in areas known to be at risk now or in future from any form of flooding", by following the steps set out within Section 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024).

Paragraph 174 goes on to state that, "Within this context the aim of the sequential test is to steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding from any source. Development should not be allocated or permitted if there are reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower risk of flooding", with the strategic flood risk assessment being the tool to demonstrate this.

Paragraph 175 details that "The sequential test should be used in areas known to be at risk now or in the future from any form of flooding, except in situations where a site-specific flood risk assessment demonstrates that no built development within the site boundary, including access or escape routes, land raising or other potentially vulnerable elements, would be located on an area that would be at risk of flooding from any source, now and in the future (having regard to potential changes in flood risk)".

If, following the application of the Sequential Test, it is not possible, consistent with wider sustainability objectives, for the development to be located in Zones with a lower probability of flooding, the Exceptions Test can be applied if appropriate.

The site lies within Flood Zones 3 of the Environment Agency's Flood Maps. These have been created as a tool to raise awareness of flood risk with the public and partner organisations, such as Local Authorities, Emergency Services and Drainage Authorities. The Maps do not take into account any flood defences.

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. Policy 4 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019) is clear in that "Development proposed within an area at risk of flooding (Flood Zones 2 and 3 of the Environment Agency's flood map or at risk during a breach or overtopping scenario as shown on the flood hazard and depths maps in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment) will be permitted" in instances where specific criteria is met.

It is worth noting that large parts of the district of South Holland lie within Flood Zone 3. It is therefore necessary to use the refined flood risk information (Hazard and Depth maps) within the South East Lincolnshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2017) as a basis to apply the sequential test.

The site is in an area defined as 'Danger for All' and an area greater than 2.0m flood depth, as such, a detailed flood risk assessment has been provided alongside consultation to the Environment Agency. Firstly, the Flood Risk Assessment outlined the following summary of risk of flooding to the site:

The probability of the development flooding from localised drainage systems are considered to be low whilst the failure of the Luton Leam Tidal Sluice could lead to an increased level of risk at the site. The probability of flooding from any Environment Agency system is less than 0.5% annually due to the flood defences which are in place. Climate change will lead to an overall increase over time, the risk from overtopping of the defences is also considered to be low. Finally, the development increases the impermeable area and therefore has the potential to increase the rate of surface water runoff from the site.

Due to the high flood risk on site, various mitigation measures have been provided within the site specific flood risk assessment. It is proposed that there should be no ground floor habitable

accommodation with the first floor accommodation being above the predicted flood depth, this being 2m. A further 1.5m of flood resilient (recovery) construction should also be featured above the finished floor level.

The Environment Agency were consulted on this application as a result of it being within Flood Zone 3 and Danger for All. Whilst they raised no objections, they requested that a condition be attached to the decision notice should the application be approved to enforce the dwelling having a minimum of two storeys and that the mitigation measures be fully implemented prior to occupation and retained thereafter throughout the lifetime of the development. The mitigation measures as well as the condition suggested by the Environment Agency should therefore help resolve any potential flooding harm.

Whilst the measures outlined give rise to adverse impacts in other regards as outlined above, when viewing these solely in respect of flood risk, these recommendations/mitigation measures are considered to be acceptable and suitable in flood risk terms and should ensure that residents who reside in this proposed property would be safe from flooding on site.

Overall, when considering the development on balance, it is considered that given the mitigation measures detailed and recommended by condition, the proposal accords with Policies 2, 3 and 4 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019) and the intentions of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) in this regard.

Highway Safety and Parking

Section 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) specifically relates to 'Promoting sustainable transport'. Paragraph 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) advises 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, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios".

In respect of highway matters, Policy 2 details 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.

Further, Policy 36, to be read in conjunction with Appendix 6, of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019), sets out minimum vehicle parking standards and requires at least two spaces for dwellings of up to three bedrooms and three spaces for dwellings with four or more bedrooms.

The conversion would only have enough room for one bedroom and therefore Appendix 6 cannot necessarily enforce how much off street parking is required in this instance. Notwithstanding this, the proposed site plan clearly identifies a large driveway to the south west corner of the site which has ample room for multiple vehicles whilst also allowing for vehicle to turn and exit the site in a forward gear.

LCC Highways have raised no objections to the scheme through the parking being acceptable as well as a new access being constructed to LCC specification. They have stated that '*In order to maintain visibility for the users of the site and the users of the public highway, the height of the proposed front boundary hedge shall be no higher than 0.6m and a condition is requested*'. As such, no harm should be caused to the highway.

The proposal would therefore be acceptable and would not have an unacceptable adverse impact on highway safety in accordance with Policies 2, 3 and 36 the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019), and Section 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024).

Biodiversity Net Gain

Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Environment Act 2021) requires developers to deliver a minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain using standardized biodiversity units measured by statutory biodiversity metrics. This is often referred to as the mandatory requirements for Biodiversity Net Gain.

"Under the statutory framework for biodiversity net gain, subject to some exceptions, every grant of planning permission is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition that the biodiversity gain objective is met ("the biodiversity gain condition"). This objective is for development to deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat. This increase can be achieved through onsite biodiversity gains, registered offsite biodiversity gains or statutory biodiversity credits".

The biodiversity gain condition is a pre-commencement condition. This relates to a condition that seeks, once planning permission has been granted, a Biodiversity Gain Plan that must be submitted and approved by the planning authority before commencement of the development, alongside the need to submit a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan.

The effect of Paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission is deemed to have been granted subject to the "biodiversity gain condition". The effect of this "biodiversity gain condition" is that development granted by this notice must not begin unless:

- (a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
- (b) the planning authority has approved the plan, or
- (c) the development is exempt from the biodiversity gain condition.

For applications that are submitted prior to the introduction of this requirement, the development would exempt from the mandatory 10% requirement and as such, the Biodiversity Gain Condition would not apply. However, this application was submitted following the introduction of this legislation. As such, unless comprising development that is exempt from this mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (10%), a condition would be required, as mandatorily set.

When taking the above into account, the development in this instance could be exempt from the statutory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain requirements. The BNG Exemption Statement outlines that the *'change of use, conversion and extension to create a single dwelling will be exempt from any biodiversity Net Gain as it is a small scale self-building dwelling which is less than 0.5 hectares'*.

It is worth noting that at this stage the Local Planning Authority have no evidence that the Applicant has signed up to this register. It is considered that if the Applicant was signed up to this register and agreed to a legal agreement the development would be exempt from the need for BNG under the above circumstances.

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 proposal represents inappropriate development outside the defined settlement boundary. Whilst the development does not cause harm to the amenity of nearby residents, provides adequate parking, has appropriate flood risk level and could meet the statutory BNG requirements; the principle of a residential dwelling in this setting is vastly unacceptable due to its conflict with Policy 1 and failure to comply with the requirements of Policy 23.

It is considered that the proposal also materially harms the character and appearance of the locality, due to the significant extension proposed; whilst the scheme would cause further harm to the significance of the NDHA, with the proposal fails to either preserve or enhance the existing building.

In this instance, the proposal is not considered to be acceptable in principle and there are material considerations that weigh against the proposal. The proposal is at direct conflict with the development plan and as such, the planning balance is not in favour of the development.

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 the above considerations into account, the proposal would be at conflict with Policies 1, 2, 3, 23 and 29 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan, and Sections 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024).

Recommendation

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