SUPPORTING STATEMENT
(incorporating Heritage Impact Assessment)

For

PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE FROM OFFICES TO YOUTHS' AWARENESS MENTORING PROGRAMME, CHARITY MEETINGS AND COMMUNITY CHURCH

At

3b RED LION STREET
SPALDING
LINCOLNSHIRE
PE11 1SX

For

RCCG NEW TESTAMENT ASSEMBLY



PLANNING APPLICATION ISSUE

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Application Summary

- This application seeks Full Planning Approval in respect of the proposed change of use of a commercial property in Spalding town centre.

- The key aims of the proposal are as follows:

    1. To change the use of the site from offices (currently vacant) to create a facility providing for functions in the following order:
       Youths Awareness Mentoring Programme.
       Charity meetings
       Community Church

    2. The installation of 1 new internal door if required by SHDC's Food and Health and Safety Department.

- The site is in Flood Zone 1, however the accommodation that this pre-app enquiry focuses on is entirely at first floor level. Additionally, there is no increase in vulnerability proposed.

- The site is within the Spalding Conservation Area, but 3b Red Lion Street is not believed to be listed.

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Introduction

In September 2026 Oglesby & Limb Ltd were commissioned to undertake a feasibility study to assess the potential to convert commercial property at 3b Red Lion Street, Spalding into a building to provide facilities for a Youths Awareness Mentoring Programme, Charity Meetings and a Community Church. The proposal was the subject of a pre-application advice enquiry, and this full application follows in the light of the guidance received at pre-app stage.

The submission comprises this report together with the application form, a site location and block plan, drawings showing conceptual floor plans and elevations, statements for biodiversity net gain and flood risk assessment.

Site Observation

Location

The site is located in the town centre of Spalding, towards the south end of Red Lion Street. Within inset map 2 of the SELLP, it is identified as being within both the 'Town Centre Boundary' and the 'Spalding Conservation Area' but outside of the 'Primary Shopping Area'. It can be located via the following means:

Nationally recognized references:

Grid reference:	TF 24748 22714
Easting / Northing:	524748, 322714
Latitude, Longitude (degs, mins, secs):	52º47'15''N, 000º09'06''W
What3Words:	clay.books.bike

Refer to drawing A1850-01 for the location and extent.

Size and features

The site comprises the upper floor of a two-storey building that fronts Red Lion Street. The ground floor is occupied by the retail shop 'Flowers and Things' and the office sits immediately above it. Access to the upper floor is gained via an internal staircase the entrance door of which is located slightly to the south, on the Red Lion Street frontage. The building is of traditional brick construction beneath a pitched roof. The roof presents a gabled frontage to Red Lion Street. A date stone on the east elevation indicates that it was constructed in 1883.

Since this application seeks approval in respect only of a change of use of the internal accommodation (i.e. no significant constructional changes) it is considered unnecessary to provide a detailed architectural analysis.

Use of the site

The ground floor of the building, 3 Red Lion Street has operated as a florist for several years. The upper floor (3b) was in use as an office, but this use has now ceased, and the unit is currently vacant.

Use and development on land surrounding the site

The site is located within Spalding Town Centre and as such it is an urban setting. It is within the town centre, but it is not within the Primary Shopping Area. As such there is more variation in terms of use along this section of Red Lion Street than there is in the nearby Market Place and Hall Place etc. Uses here at ground floor level include a college campus, a florist, 2 hairdressers, a nail bar, a sushi shop, a bakery with tea-room, and ice cream shop and a small convenience store. At upper floor level there is an escape room, an educational provider and some residential use.

Amenities

All town centre amenities are directly accessible from this site on foot. Access to the national transport system is available via the bus station (300m to the north-west) and the railway station (400m to the west). This location is considered to be highly sustainable.

Site Appraisal

Details of the site and general context have been described above. From those findings the following statements relative to the site are believed true.

1. The site is located within Spalding town centre and as such is highly sustainable. It is not however within the Primary Shopping Area.

2. The accommodation is sufficient in size for the proposed purposes of the applicant. This is however, viewed as a temporary situation because the group size continues to increase. The facilities available suit the current need and will continue to do so for up to 5 years.

3. The site is close to the Herring Lane Car Park as well as to on-street parking along Broad Street and New Road. The site is also within easy walking distance of the bus station and the railway station, making public transport a viable means of travelling to it.

4. The change of use could take place without any significant material changes to the existing building. The proposed use would then continue for a maximum of 5 years. There would be no indefinite loss of the facility as an office in the future if required.

Demolition statement:

The proposed works would not require any demolition.

Flood Risk Assessment:

The Environment Agency Flood Risk Map identifies the site being within flood zone 1. A flood risk assessment statement is provided separately within the submission pack.

Development Proposal:

The proposal would include the following:

1. The change of use from office to provide a space for a Youths Awareness Mentoring Programme, Charity Meetings and a Community Church. This will also involve serving refreshments (tea and coffee etc).

2. Minor alterations to the building interior limited to the installation of a new door to the kitchen if required.

3. The installation of a new sign to the building exterior (which will be covered under a separate application).

The building would become a meeting space for the community church where small discussion groups and youth mentoring etc could take place. Refreshments would also be offered. It would effectively provide a small community hub. Group sizes would naturally be limited by the space available.

Operating details

If approved, the intention is to operate the facility 7 days a week. At different times during the week, it would be used for a youth mentoring awareness programme (individuals and small groups estimated to be up to 10 in number), for charity and small group meetings (similar numbers) and as a community church (at weekends with maximum numbers up to around 25 adults plus some children across the course of the day). Refreshments will be available for small meeting groups etc with numbers for this generally in the range of a maximum of 10-15 people.

Hours of use
The intended hours of use are as follows:

Monday to Friday	-	08:30 to 18:30
Friday and Saturday	-	08:30 to 22:00
Sundays	-	09:30 to 22:00
Bank Holidays	-	09:30 to 18:30

Note that the closing time for Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays (22:00hrs) would be on certain occasions only, generally the unit will close earlier on these days.

Planning Statement:

Several policies currently have relevance to this proposal. Some of the most specific relevant ones are cited below.

National Planning Policy Framework (2026)

Section 8 – Ensuring the vitality of town centres
Policy TC1: Planning for town centres

1. *To promote the long-term vitality and viability of town centres, development plans should at the most appropriate level:*
   a. *Be informed by a strategy for town centres in the area, to ensure that the full range of potential needs and opportunities for development is considered. This includes the scope to accommodate additional floorspace, to broaden the mix of uses beyond main town centre uses (including residential development) where this would not undermine the vitality and viability of the centre, to strengthen or re-introduce markets, to bring vacant sites and premises back into use, and to reduce or expand the boundaries of town centres where appropriate.*

The above specifically includes a 'mix of uses beyond main town centre uses'. It goes on to say 'where this would not undermine the vitality and viability of the centre'. Clearly the specified use could be considered as a use 'beyond main town centre uses' but it is of limited scale and would not therefore undermine the vitality or viability of the town centre. The proposal may therefore align with this policy statement.

Section 8 – Ensuring the vitality of town centres
Policy TC2: Development in town centres

1. *In considering proposals for development in town centres, substantial weight should be given to the benefits of:*
   a. *Supporting the overall vitality and viability of the town centre, including where this can be achieved through diversification of uses, intensification, and provision of residential accommodation (provided this would not conflict with policies in the development plan for specific locations): and*
   b. *Improving or retaining access to local shop and other facilities which provide day-to-day services for the local community.*

The proposed use will attract people to the building (for the mentoring, meetings and teas and coffees and whilst in town it is likely that those attending will also make use of other facilities in the town centre. There will therefore be benefits for the use of the building, but also the use of other nearby shops etc within proximity.

Section 12 – Making effective use of land
Policy L2: Making effective use of land

1. *Substantial weight should be given to the benefits where a development proposal would achieve one or more of the following:*
   b. making better use of vacant and underutilized land and buildings (such as: by bringing back into residential use empty homes and other suitable buildings; converting space above shops; redeveloping underutilized retail and business

sites; and building on or above service yards, lock-ups, car parks and other transport infrastructure which are no longer required).

At present unit 3B Red Lion Street is vacant, and it stands above a shop. The demand for office space is unpredictable as hybrid and work-from-home formats have grown in popularity. The proposed use would offer diversification to bring this building back into use immediately, albeit for a temporary period of up to 5 years. The proposed use would nonetheless bring benefit in that it would bring the vacant offices back into use immediately. Visitors to it would also use the town centre which would be an associated benefit.

South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019)

Policy 24: The Retail Hierarchy

Whilst the proposed use is not listed for Sub-Regional Centres, it is considered that any conflict here is small and the overall balance of the benefits of the proposal should be considered against this.

Policy 25: Supporting the Vitality and Viability of Boston and Spalding Town Centres

The proposal would not appear to conflict with this policy generally. Specifically with regard to item 7, the wording is as follows:

The Councils will promote appropriate opportunities to support and extend the offer of the town centres as destinations through the following:

7. Encouraging opportunities to support temporary uses in vacant premises in the Primary Shopping Areas.

Whilst the site is not within the Primary Shopping Area, it is within 30m of it and as such is likely to still be relevant. The proposal is a temporary use.

Pre-Application Enquiry Response:

Pre-application advice was received on 27.10.26 under SHDC reference HPE-0989-26 with the case officer being Mr Oscar Patman.

Whilst it is not necessary to repeat the pre-application response here, it did provide a through, balanced view of how the proposal relates to planning policy both at National (NPPF) and local (SELLP) scale.

It was noted within the response that there is slight conflict with Policy 7 of the SELLP which relates to the loss of employment space. Of the three criteria under this policy the following observations are made:

Conversion and redevelopment of, or change of use from, existing non allocated employment sites to non-employment uses will be considered on their merits taking account of:

1. **Whether the loss of land or buildings would adversely affect the economic growth and employment opportunities in the area the site or building would likely serve;**

   In this respect the pre-app response went on to say:
   The loss of a single, fairly small office unit is unlikely to have an adverse effect on economic growth in the wider area. The income generated through rent will remain consistent, and the nature of the proposed use would mean that there would still be a reasonable level of footfall generated. As a result, there would still be secondary economic benefits, as the congregation / volunteers may choose to use nearby shops and facilities at the same time as their visit to the church. Beyond this, the loss would be for a temporary period, and therefore, the impact upon long term growth or employment opportunities would be lessened.

   The applicant agrees with the above. In addition, at the time of the submission of the application there are office suites currently available to rent within the Red Lion Quarter with 30m of the site. As at 03.11.26 unit 3 (429sq.ft), unit 5 (259sq.ft), unit 10 (397sq.ft) and unit 12 (397sq.ft) are all available to rent.

2. **Whether it is demonstrated that the site is inappropriate or unviable for any employment use to continue and no longer capable of providing an acceptable location for employment purposes; and**
   In this respect the pre-app response went on to say:
   It has not been demonstrated that the site is incapable of providing a business use or that the existing use is unviable. However, this point should be caveated by the fact that the change of use would be temporary.
   The applicant again agrees with the above. The 'loss' would only be temporary and the use would revert at the end of the period, meaning that the employment opportunity would then continue.

3. **Whether the applicant has provided clear documentary evidence that the property and / or land has been appropriately but proportionately marketed without a successful conclusion for a period of not less than 12 months on terms that reflect the lawful use and condition of the premises.**
   Marketing details are not provided, however again, the loss of the office would be temporary only, and the demonstrated availability of vacant office space within 30m of the site (Red Lion Quarter) confirms that at present supply may be outstripping demand.

The above relates to policy 7 of the SELLP however the proposals fully align with several other policies as indicated in the preapplication response.

In summary, the site is in a sustainable location (at the top of the spatial strategy as defined within SELLP Policy 1) and offers diversification of use in a town centre location by reusing existing accommodation above a retail shop. The proposed used is not defined as a main town centre use by the NPPF, however the existence of other churches within the town centre does prove its compatibility with the location. The use will provide a community facility for people, in the town and there will be secondary economic benefit in this as visitors to the building will use the town centre facilities whilst here. The occupation of the building will ensure its upkeep and presentation for another 5 years. No changes are proposed to the building exterior, so there will be no detrimental impacts in terms of the architectural or historic value of the context.

Heritage Impact Assessment

The current NPPF requires the submission of a proportionate Heritage Impact Assessment for certain application types. In this case this is relevant because the site is within the Spalding Conservation Area.

Historic Map Study

Since the proposal will have no impact upon the building exterior, it is considered unnecessary to undertake a deep historical analysis of the setting. The map of 1887 of the town shows development along Red Lion Street, including this site, and this would align well with the buildings date stone of 1883. By that date, the street pattern and general urban massing are already established. The illustration below (fig. 01) is taken from the map of 1887 and indicates 3 listed buildings which have sight lines to the proposal site, these being The Black Swan pub on New Road, 25 and 26 Red Lion Street and the Red Lion Hotel in the Market Place.

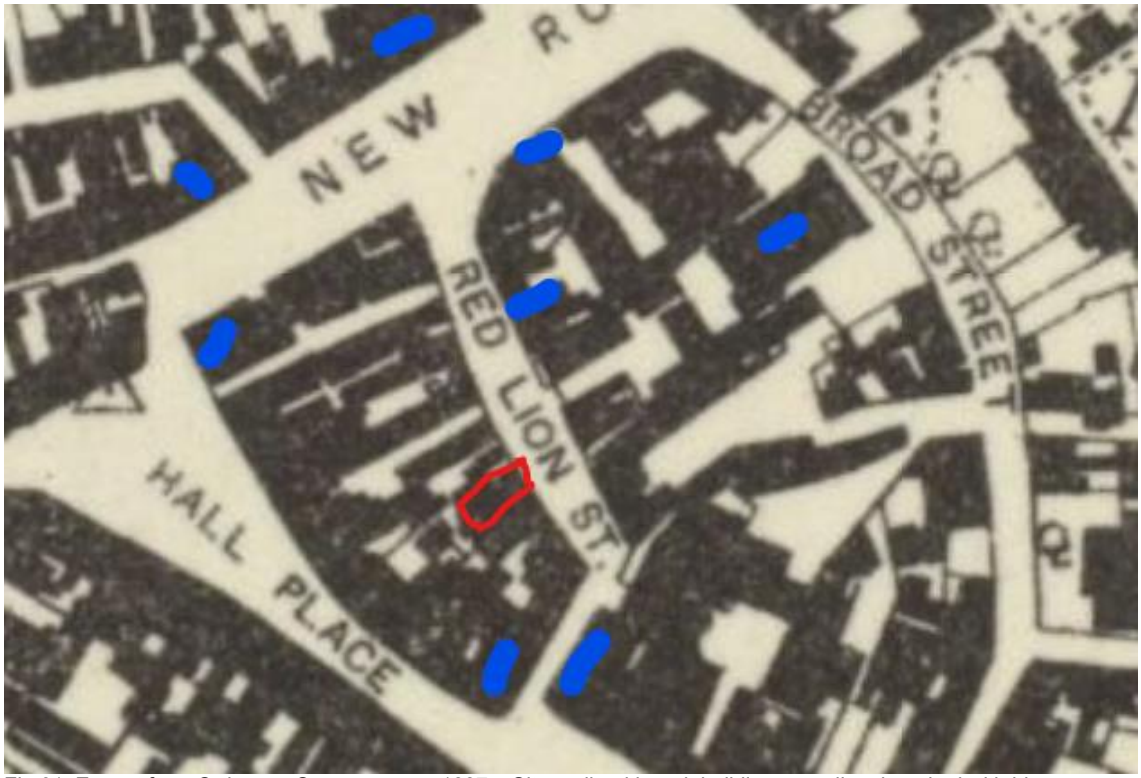


Fig 01. Extract from Ordnance Survey map or 1887. Site outlined in red, buildings now listed marked with blue.

Statement of Significance

Site

The area proposed for change of use is entirely internal and comprises the upper floor of a two-storey block which presents a gable front to Red Lion Street. The floor area in focus is at 3b Red Lion Street and at present is an office, albeit that it is not currently occupied.

The building has external walls constructed in red brick laid in Flemish Bond (figs. 02 & 03). The block is rectilinear in form and presents a simple gable to Red Lion street. The eaves and verge detailing is simple and is constructed in the same brick. The upper floor has windows on the east and north elevations. The east elevation (facing Red Lion Street) has a single window set centrally. This has a flat, brick-on-end soldier course head and a creasing tile sill. The windows to the upper floor of the north elevation have the same constructional detailing. The east elevation has plain stone kneeler blocks at the verge/eaves intersection and a stone coping atop a gable parapet. The north elevation has an applied timber fascia, though it is not known whether this is the original detail. The roof is a duo-pitched configuration with what appears to be a traditional slate covering. The windows are painted timber casements, though these appear to be of later construction.

Internally, the finishes and fittings all appear to date from the late 20th Century (figs. 04 & 05).



Fig 02. East elevation.



Fig. 03. North elevation


Fig 04. General interior looking west.


Fig. 05. General interior looking east.

Setting and nearby sites of heritage interest

The site is within the Spalding Conservation Area and is visible from both directions along Red Lion Street. The exterior of the building is of some architectural and historic importance, which is mainly attributed to its position, form, massing, general design, and the materials of the external walls and roof. The position and appearance of the building within the streetscene contribute to the overall aesthetic of Red Lion Street and the wider conservation area. There are three listed buildings visible from the site and as such 3b Red Lion Street is within their setting.

Assessment of the impact of the proposals

There are no proposals that will impact upon the building exterior and consequently neither will there be any impact upon the Spalding Conservation Area, nor the setting of any of the nearby listed buildings.

Internally the only intervention will be the potential installation of a door to the kitchen, which is not in itself a planning matter because the building is not listed. In any event the interior is modern and of no value.

Overall Summary

The proposal is for the temporary use of a vacant office suite within Spalding Town Centre. It is believed that the use would follow the principle of diversification to find a use for an unused building, above a shop. The proposed use would attract people to use the building and this in itself would be a benefit as a meeting hub where people can meet to talk and enjoy refreshments (a community benefit) but in addition those people are almost certain to utilize the other facilities that the town has to offer whilst they are in such close proximity. This being the case it is believed that the facility would contribute to the vitality and viability of the town centre.

The use would be on a temporary basis lasting up to a maximum of 5 years. This would mean that the building would return to office use at the end of this period, so there would be no loss of a potential employment site.

From a heritage perspective, no works are proposed that would impact on architectural or historic value either on the site or within its physical context.

Given the foregoing it is therefore believed that the temporary change of use would respond to policies both within the new NPPF and the SELLP in contributing to the vitality and viability of the town centre, without presenting any detriment.

END