

Online Comment

Application H17-0980-24
Location The Old Chapel 82 Seas End Road Surfleet PE11 4DQ
Proposal Residential Development - Single Dwelling - including demolition of 'Old Chapel' 0.039Ha and change of use of part Agricultural field to Site for Biodiversity Measures. 0.045Ha.

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Date Submitted 31-01-25
For/Against Comments

Thank you for consulting us on this application.

The proposed development will comprise: Residential Development - Single Dwelling - including demolition of 'Old Chapel' 0.039Ha and change of use of part Agricultural field to Site for Biodiversity Measures. 0.045Ha.

Heritage significance:

The former chapel retains a high degree of legibility in its original form and function, contributing meaningfully to the historic identity of Surfleet. Its local heritage value is particularly significant given its relationship with the earlier primitive methodist 'preaching house' at the other end of the village. The demolition of this building would result in the erosion of the area's historic environment and sense of place, which directly conflicts with the National Planning Policy Framework's (NPPF) aim of preserving buildings of local interest.

Policy considerations:

Non-designated heritage asset

The building is recorded on the Historic Environment Record (HER) under building number MLI97740. As such, the scale of harm or loss must be carefully weighed in determining any application that directly or indirectly affects its significance (NPPF, paragraph 216 Dec 2024). The complete demolition of the chapel would constitute substantial harm, which should be avoided unless exceptional circumstances are demonstrated.

Sustainable development

The NPPF emphasises the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, including through their conversion to viable uses (NPPF, paragraphs 203 and 210 Dec 2024). The submitted application has not adequately explored the potential for converting the existing building to residential use, which would align with sustainable development principles. This is particularly relevant given the reasonable condition of the building's fabric and the embodied carbon energy it represents.

Planning balance

The proposed development seeks to deliver a new family home, which is a recognised benefit. However, this must be weighed against the total loss of a historic building that contributes to the area's historic identity and sense of place. The former chapel serves as a local landmark, and its demolition would result in a net loss of heritage value for the community. Retaining and repurposing the building would provide a more balanced outcome, addressing both the heritage and development needs of the local area.

Recommendation:

Based on the above, we recommend refusal of the current application.

Finally, considering the building significance and potential impacts to the setting, the SHDC Conservation officer must be consulted before a decision is made.

With respect to the attached historic environment recommendation, 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 further details.