05.04.2024

Whaplode Methodist Church
Change of Use Planning, Design and Access Statement

Introduction

This application is for the change of use for Whaplode Methodist Church from use class B8 to use as a single residential dwelling. The church is currently used as storage for ceramic pots and planters and was formerly a place of worship. Planning consent was granted in 2013 for change of use from a place of worship to a dwelling house, this permission was not implemented and has since lapsed.

Previous Use

Whaplode Methodist Church, built in 1838, was used as a place of worship until 2013. The building, which originally had a simple square plan, has been extended, with a single storey block to the rear and side. The Church closed its doors in 2013, due to dwindling congregation numbers and was then vacant for two years. In 2013 planning permission, reference H23-0411-13, was granted for the change of use from a place of worship to a single residential dwelling with three bedrooms, however this was not implemented.

Current Use

In 2015 the applicant received planning permission, reference H23-0954-15, for a change of use from a place of worship to class B8, allowing the applicant to use the building as storage for ceramic pots and planters. This permission was granted for the sole benefit of Simon Wakeham trading as Brock Business limited, and placed further limits on the use, ensuring the building could only be used as a storage facility for ceramics and associated goods and paraphernalia.

Since this change of use, a mezzanine with timber staircase has been created within the main church hall, providing accommodation at first floor level.

Existing Building Performance

Since acquiring the church the applicant has upgraded the thermal performance of the building fabric. Internal wall insulation has been installed to the original solid masonry church walls, insulation has been installed under a new ground floor slab and the roof has also been insulated. New double glazed timber framed windows, to match the exiting timber windows were installed to the sides elevations. The original stained-glass windows to the front of the church were repaired and restored, and secondary glazing has also been installed to these windows. The building has a commercial EPC of C, and it is expected this can be improved further during the works to convert to residential use, with the installation of LED lighting throughout and a lower-carbon high-efficiency heating system.

Proposed Use

Permission is sought for a change of use to convert the building into a single residential dwelling house. No external change is proposed as part of these works, all changes proposed are internal and will have no impact on the existing buildings mass, size or appearance externally.

Proposed Internal Changes

Internally partitions will be reconfigured, and new bathrooms and kitchens added to convert the building into a single residential dwelling. Please refer to the plans accompany this this application.

Transport and Accessibility

Off street parking is provided for two cars, within the plot's existing hard-standing, and no change to the parking configuration or entry from the road is proposed. The plot is less than a 5-minute walk to bus stops, where a regular bus service runs to Spalding and Kings Lynn.

Step free access is provided from the street to the internal ground floor, via the ramp at the side of the building. Sanitary accommodation is provided at ground floor level, and bathrooms are proposed to be installed on the first-floor mezzanine. The proposed plans show bedroom 1 and the ground floor bathroom sized larger than necessary to comply with approved document M, category 3 homes, which means the dwelling could be adapted to suit a wheelchair user.

Conclusion

The Old Methodist Church has the potential to be a high quality, accessible, energy efficient and spacious residential dwelling. The proposals make use of an existing building, creating new housing without impacting local biodiversity and nature. The internal spaces and existing building fabric have already been carefully repaired, restored and upgraded to protect the building for future use, and this new use will protect the building for future generations. Converting the old church to a dwelling will be a positive next step in the building's life and use.

Photographs

(Overleaf)



Front (South) Elevation – No changes proposed to external fabric



Front & East Elevation – No changes proposed to external fabric



View of front façade from proposed living room – showing restored window, with secondary glazing and oak stair to mezzanine.



Stair to mezzanine level



Original restored purlins, insulated above



View front proposed living room showing mezzanine floor