OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 24/02363/LBC Listed Building Consent

Proposal: Conversion and Alteration of Building to Residential Use

Location: All Saints Church Denton Road Denton

Applicant: Ely Diocesan

Grid Ref: 515018 287847

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

This application relates to a Grade ll Listed Building which is All Saints Church and its associated churchyard located in Denton. It is not within a Conservation Area and there are no other heritage assets in the immediate vicinity.

The church has been closed since the early 1960s when it had its roof removed for safety. The shell of the building and the tower remain but the building is effectively a ruin and unused. The churchyard is substantially overgrown with large trees and vegetation.

This application seeks Listed Building Consent for the conversion and alteration of the building in order to use it for residential purposes. It follows earlier withdrawn/refused applications set out later in this report. An application for Planning Permission (24/02361/FUL) accompanies this application.

Officers have scrutinised the plans and have familiarised themselves with the site and surrounding area.

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

The National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) (NPPF 2024) sets out the three objectives - economic, social and environmental - of the planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF 2024 at paragraph 10 provides as follows: 'So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).'

The NPPF 2024 sets out the Government's planning policies for (amongst other things):

* delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
* building a strong, competitive economy;
* achieving well-designed, beautiful and safe places;
* conserving and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.

For full details visit the government website: https://www.gov.uk

PLANNING POLICIES

Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 (2019)

LP2: Strategy for Development

LP30: Biodiversity & Geodiversity
LP34: Heritage Assets and their Settings

Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017)

Local policies are viewable at https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

19/01843/FUL - Change of use of Church (Class D1) to dwellinghouse (Class C3) with new roof and fencing (Withdrawn)

19/01844/LBC - Internal and external repairs and alterations (Withdrawn)

20/02401/FUL - Conversion and alternation of building to residential use (Withdrawn)

20/02402/LBC - Conversion and alternation of building to residential use (Withdrawn)

23/02492/FUL - Conversion, alterations and repairs to church building (including new roof with rooflight and dormer windows, rebuilding of porch with glazed canopy roof and new door) to create 3-bed dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) with associated access, parking and private amenity areas (Refused)

23/02492/FUL - Conversion, alterations and repairs to church building (including new roof with rooflight and dormer windows, rebuilding of porch with glazed canopy roof and new door) to create 3-bed dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) (Refused)

24/02361/FUL - Conversion and alteration of building to residential use (Pending consideration - associated with this application).

CONSULTATIONS

Denton and Caldecote Parish Meeting recommend approval.

HDC Conservation Team- No objection subject to conditions.

Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) Archaeology Team - No objection subject to conditions.

Historic England - No comment - seek views of internal heritage advisers.

Wildlife Trust - No objections subject to conditions.

HDC Ecology Officer - No objections to mitigation measures.

REPRESENTATIONS

None received at the time of determination.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:

*Impact upon the Designated Heritage Assets

*Biodiversity

* Impact upon the Designated Heritage Assets

This application seeks consent for the conversion of an existing Grade ll Listed Church building to a three-bedroom dwellinghouse with associated access, parking and private amenity space. The proposal involves various alterations and repairs to the existing building, including the installation of a roof, given its current state of disrepair. The surroundings are predominantly rural, with narrow country roads and heavy tree/shrub coverage which (certainly in the Summer months) to some degree obscures the ruins of the Church which at the time of the site visit was protected by Heras fencing.

Section 66 of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990 states that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the Local Planning Authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Para. 212 of the NPPF sets out that 'When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance'.

Para. 213 states that 'Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification'

Local Plan policy LP34 aligns with the statutory provisions and NPPF advice.

The application is accompanied by a Heritage Statement and both Historic England and HDC's Conservation Team have been consulted.

The roof would be finished in Collyweston slate roof tiles and there would also be the installation of two gable dormer windows on the south elevation roofslope, a rooflight on the north elevation roofslope and the installation of a front porch on the north elevation.

The design and appearance of the proposed external works are considered to be acceptable with the Council's Conservation Officer confirming the proposed roof tiles are suitable and would reflect the character of the existing property and locality. The proposed dormer windows are considered to be acceptable in principle and further details of their construction shall be secured by condition on the accompanying FUL application.

Historic England had no comments to make (but point out that this should not be read as no objection and suggested views of internal specialists (Conservation) be sought. Conservation have been consulted and, following a review of the submitted details also raise no objections (subject to relevant conditions).

Conservation have observed that following engagement with officers a number of amendments have been made to an earlier version of the scheme which all serve to protect and enhance the Listed Building and assist in securing its future. Conditions suggested relate to joinery details, glazing, plasterwork details, bell tower, roof, and floors and (where necessary) securing a schedule of repairs. The Case Officer view accords with this and these conditions shall be added to the consent.

In summary, having regard to the level of detail provided to support the application, the fact that this secures the future of a heritage asset for its optimum viable use (in accordance with Paragraphs 84 and 215 of the NPPF) and the advice of specialists, Officers are satisfied that any harm will be less than substantial and outweighed by the benefits detailed above. Therefore, the

scheme accords with Policy LP34 of the Local Plan to 2036, the provisions of the NPPF (2024) and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

*Biodiversity

Policy LP30 if the Local Plan requires a development to ensure no net loss of biodiversity and achieve a net gain where possible. The earlier refusal related to insufficient detail (bat surveys were required). This revised application now includes a bat survey which was prepared in September 2024 (with surveys conducted between June and September 2024). It concludes that there was an absence of roosting bats within the building but due to a historic presence of day roosts they suggest a precautionary method of works. The survey further recommends that the roof of the tower be used to create a roost suitable by brown long-eared bats and crevice dwelling species. No additional license is required. Section 6.1.4 advises that enhancement opportunities are in Appendix 1 but are in fact in Section 5 and shall be secured by condition.

HDC's Ecology Officer and The Wildlife Trust have both been consulted and raise no objections on this basis.

*Conclusion

The works are considered to be compliant with the relevant national and local policy as:

* They would not result in harm to the designated heritage assets.
*Are acceptable with regard to biodiversity impacts.

Taking national and local planning policies into account, and having regard for all relevant material considerations, it is recommended that Listed Building Consent be granted, subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions.

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CONTACT OFFICER:
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