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## **PROPOSED CONVERSION**

**OF**

**PARKWOOD METHODIST CHURCH  
1 PARKWOOD ROAD  
LONGWOOD  
HUDDERSFIELD  
HD3 4TT  
INTO**

**12 NO. APARTMENTS**

## **HERITAGE STATEMENT**



## 1.00 INTRODUCTION

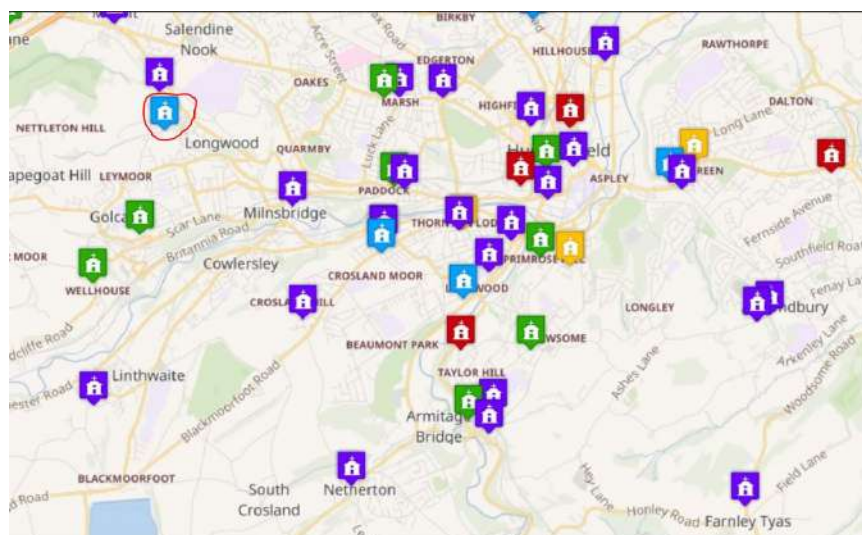
- 1.01 Parkwood Methodist Church has had to cease its use as a place of worship due to dwindling congregation numbers and the unsustainable costs of running such a large building.
- 1.02 After much discussion between all interested parties it has been decided to sell the building with a use which will maximise its value and ensure its long term longevity as a listed building of architectural significance.
- 1.03 The consensus is that the new use which will best achieve this aim is to convert the building into a residential use. The high cost of conversion dictates that the expense should be spread over as many individual units as possible.
- 1.04 Therefore the accompanying application is for change of use and listed building consent to convert the building into 12 apartments spread over 3 floors, with associated parking in the grounds.

## 2.00 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

- 2.01 The chapel was built in 1868 – 69 by Wesleyan Reformers who had seceded from Longwood Wesleyan Methodist Church in 1852. It was subsequently enlarged in 1897.
- 2.02 Methodism in its various offshoots was strong in the Huddersfield area with almost every township, as the districts were then called, having at least one purpose-built chapel. The map below shows the extent of the chapels in the area.

The primitive chapels are shown in red. The New Connexion chapels are shown in green. The Wesleyan Methodist chapels are shown in purple and the Free United chapels are shown in blue.

Parkwood Chapel is circled in red with the Wesleyan Methodist chapel from which it seceded shown in purple to the north.



- 2.03 The building was granted Grade 2 listed building status on 11<sup>th</sup> July 1985 under list entry no. 1274925.
- 2.04 The list entry reads: 1868 (datestone) chapel. Hammer dressed stone with ashler dressings. Pitched grey slate roof with hip to north. Stone brackets. Coped gable. 2 storeys. South elevation (front of church): buttresses to either side with moulded heads; arched ashlar band in gable apex is inscribed:

UNITED METHODIST FREE CHURCH AD1868



Two slender semi-circular arched windows with stained glass and hooded mouldings over. Central doorway with semi-circular fanlight in ashlar surround comprising two square pilasters with full entablature. Entire doorway has overarch. Door approached by flight of stone steps. East elevation: Ground Floor: rectangular casement windows. First floor: six slender windows with semi-circular heads. Drip mouldings (one window with stained glass).

West elevation: as east.

- 2.05 There is a separate Grade 2 listing for the Gates, Gateposts and Railings under list entry 1221930.

The list entry reads:

1868. Two square ashlar gate piers with moulded cap. Hammer dressed stone dwarf walls with copings and iron gate and railings.

- 2.06 The chapel and its surroundings are situated in the southern section of the Longwood Edge Conservation Area, to which, the chapel and its setting make a positive contribution.
- 2.07 Parkwood Chapel has outlived the chapel from which is seceded from as this was closed down in 1977 and subsequently demolished to make way for a new house. Parkwood closed its doors as a chapel in 2019 and while its listed status will ensure that it does not follow the same fate, it is essential to secure a viable use which will ensure its continuity as a workable, well-maintained building which still manifests, at least externally, its former purpose.
- 2.08 An indication of its former wealth and congregation size was manifested by the later construction of a separate Sunday School building to the north of the chapel, which was linked to the north elevation. This was first shown on the O.S. Map of 1929.



*OS Map of 1929*

It has subsequently been demolished and a prefabricated Scout Hut building now stands in its place. The Scout Hut will be removed when the Chapel is sold and work started on its conversion.

- 2.09 Before the Chapel gained its northern access, the access since its inception had always been from the south, off Parkwood Road. This would account for its more ornate gabled entrance and stone gate posts and gates as described in the two listings, when compared with the north elevation and its plain, rectangular windows, lack of ornamentation and hipped roof.
- 2.10 In addition to the elevational treatment of the Chapel, which makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area, by being a unique building type for the area, the setting and location also contribute to its local distinctiveness.



- 2.11 The Chapel is situated on elevated land located between Parkwood Road to the south and Royles Head Lane to the north. Parkwood Road is the original access in to the chapel while Royles Head Lane is a later access as mentioned above.
- 2.12 Both roads rise up from their respective junctions with Glebe Street to the east and which is effectively the road in the valley bottom. The Chapel therefore affords a commanding position when viewed from the valley bottom, with a backdrop of wooded rising land in which the graveyard is situated. The elevated setting along with the imposing massing of the building makes a significant contribution to this southern end of the Conservation Area.
- 2.13 Also apparent on this edition of the O. S. Map, presumably to correspond with the construction of the Sunday School, there is a full width access to the grounds from the north off Royles Head Lane, which still exists today as the vehicular access through the two large gate posts and curved boundary walls.
- 2.14 This entrance was originally constructed to only serve Ash Grove, a large house situated off Royles Head Lane to the north west of the chapel. This is first manifest on the 1907 map – see below. The northern boundary of the church grounds appears remote from any access from the north on this plan.



- 2.15 It is interesting to see that even today, the gateposts still bear the name of the house they were originally built to serve – see below. It would seem logical but incorrect to assume that this entrance was built to serve the chapel and not a single house a remote distance away to the west.



*Existing Ash Grove Gate Posts*

- 2.16 Ash Grove still exists today and a comparison between the scarcity of windows on the northern elevation and the preponderance of windows on the southern elevation illustrate how this house's main frontage and subsequent approach is from the south along the drive way accessed through the large gateposts which still bear the house name and which, at some point, became the northern access to the chapel.
- 2.17 Apart from the previous demolition of the Sunday School and the insertion of the incongruous scout hut in the grounds, the exterior of the Chapel has remained virtually intact since its construction. As so many of the original chapels shown on the earlier location map have either been altered drastically or demolished, the significance of Parkwood as an original example of a 19<sup>th</sup> century Methodist Chapel is considerable.

- 2.18 The retention of the original condition of the chapel is also manifest internally (see photo below).



The original timber pews, pulpit, choir stalls and organ remain intact along with the original decorative features – mouldings, decorative brackets, cornices, ceiling roses etc. Whilst most of the decorative features can remain and be incorporated into the conversion, the original timber features will have to be removed to be able to carry out the conversion. Other than the chapel remaining as a place of worship which the fittings were exclusively used for, any future use of the building, not just in residential use would necessitate their removal.

### **3.00 HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 3.01 Regarding the impact the proposal will have on the significance of the heritage asset. As the use for which it was constructed no longer exists any alternative use is bound to have an impact upon the building. It is just a question of degree. After examining potential uses which will both minimise the impact on the building but yet ensure its continued upkeep and value as a heritage asset, residential conversion was considered to be the least intrusive on the fabric of the building.
- 3.02 Regarding the impact of the proposal on the external appearance and setting of the chapel. The entrance off Parkwood Road will remain in tact with the listed gate posts and gates remaining untouched. The entrance steps and south elevation giving access to six of the twelve apartments will remain untouched, as will the west and east elevation, whose existing door will give access to the remaining six apartments.

- 3.03 It is only on the north elevation where any fenestration alterations will take place where the two lower windows will be walled up and two further windows will be introduced at first floor level to line up with the existing retained upper ground floor windows. There will be no increase in the number of windows proposed.
- 3.04 The most significant external alterations will be made to cater for the vehicular access and car parking for the apartments. The existing width between the two gate posts, which are not listed in their own right, is sub-standard for highways requirements therefore the eastern gate post will have to be repositioned and the wall between the road and gatepost re-built using the same stone.



- 3.05 The recently built wall following the line of the drive from the rear of the existing eastern gatepost will also have to be re-built to accommodate the widening of the drive sufficient to allow two cars to pass.

- 3.06 When the existing Scout Hut is demolished this area to the north of the building will be re-formed as part of the parking requirement. The memorial area containing children's graves will be re-furbished and an enclosed bin store will be constructed. Any residential areas will be landscaped to lessen the impact of the hard surfacing.



- 3.07 The existing lawned area to the east of the chapel will also require making into a parking court to accommodate the required number of parking spaces. However, the existing strip of rose garden between the building and the proposed parking area will be retained as an important feature which in addition to the roses also contains memorial plaques which are to remain.



- 3.08 In mitigation for this disturbance, a new stone wall is to be built to demarcate the car park from the landscaped area to the north which is to be upgraded to a remembrance garden with additional landscaping and planting created. All these alterations are shown on the application site layout.



- 3.09 Internally, the proposed use (or any other alternative use other than as a place of worship) dictates that all the timber pews, pulpit, choir stalls and organ will need to be removed to be able to carry out the conversion. It is envisaged that a new home can be found for these items so that they can continue life in a different setting. However, if any of the features can be utilised in the conversion proposals this re-use will be considered.



- 3.10 At a pre-application meeting with the Head of Conservation and Design on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2017, the principle of residential conversion was agreed and that the removal of all the internal fixtures was considered acceptable to be able to start with a clear internal space so the new internal layout could be optimised.



- 3.11 This re-working of the interior also included the insertion of a new first floor in the cleared internal space. It would necessitate the floor being taken across the tall semi-circular arched windows and a slight re-configuring taking place. However, the position of the floor would be in the region where the existing central horizontal window band is located, so the overall shape and proportion of the window pattern would not be significantly compromised.

#### **4.00 PROPOSALS AND JUSTIFICATIONS**

- 4.01 The chapel is currently empty having ceased its use as a place of worship due to the high running costs having to be supported by an ever dwindling church membership. A point was reached where this became unsustainable and the chapel subsequently closed.
- 4.02 There are even ongoing costs and maintenance liabilities associated with an empty building, so anew use had to be found which would make the sale of the building an attractive proposition as possible.

- 4.03 Also, the new use when instigated had to be capable of supporting the ongoing maintenance of the heritage asset to ensure its long term conservation as a listed building and continue to make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.
- 4.04 The conversion of the building into apartments ideally satisfies the above requirements and maximising the number of individual units enables the ongoing management and maintenance costs to be spread over as many units as possible.
- 4.05 The successful conversion of Parkwood Mills into apartments immediately to the south of the chapel (see below) demonstrated how this new use of a redundant building can be successfully achieved.



- 4.06 As mentioned previously, the proposals have been discussed and agreed in principle with the Head of Conservation and Design. In addition, the proposed conversion of this designated heritage asset would appear to accord with paragraphs 192, 193 and 196 of the NPPF and Police LP35 paragraph 3 of the Kirklees Local Plan.