

Heritage Statement & Heritage Impact Assessment

Rev A – Jan 2024

For the Conversion Of
Wooldale Methodist Chapel,
Wooldale Road, Wooldale



Contents:

1.0	Generally	Page 3
2.0	Asset Summary Description	Page 4
3.0	Site Location & Description	Page 4
4.0	Heritage Statement:	Page 6
-	Building History Generally	
-	Detailed Building History	
-	Historic Maps	
-	Wider Context of Wooldale	
-	Heritage Significance	
5.0	Planning History/Context	Page 13
6.0	Heritage Impact Assessment	Page 14
7.0	Conclusions	Page 19

Appendix A - General Photos, description, timeline of alterations.

Appendix B - Alternative Uses Feasibility Study

1.0 Generally:

- 1.1 Paul Matthews Architectural, Malkin Farm, Brow Lane, Holmfirth, HD9 2RJ is instructed by, Messrs A. Bennett & L. Lockwood, owners of the former Wooldale Methodist Chapel to prepare proposals for the residential conversion of the former Chapel.
- 1.2 The proposals have been prepared in parallel with the development of this supporting Heritage Statement, which is also to be read in conjunction with the Design & Access Statement, the "As Existing" drawings and the Proposal Drawings, also prepared by Paul Matthews Architectural Ltd.
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is, in the first instance, to identify and record the history and significance of the heritage asset (and/or its constituent components), on which any proposals of alteration may impact, and secondly to assess the impact of the proposed residential conversion of the building on the significance of the heritage asset, its setting and contribution of the wider area/society. This is done through on-site studying and investigatory works in and around the building as well as desk-based research, through online material, published documents and literature and archival evidence provided by the local historical society..

The historical society have provided detailed information showing the evolution of the building through to 2010.

The Listing Description, held by Historic England describes the notable exterior features of the building.

“Chapel. Circa 1830 with c.1880-90 addition. Hammer dressed stone, pitch faced to addition. Stone slate roof, blue slates to addition. Gable copings and ashlar stacks. Simple hall of 5 bays, consisting of 4 round arched windows with Keystone and impost blocks, and stone porch to end bay with moulded cornice and blocking course. The later addition is at 90° and is a 6 bay hall with round arched windows. The gable frontage has stepped and scrolled parapet with scrolled pediment at apex. Ball finials on kneelers. Central oculus with hood mould and keystone. Central 3-light round headed window with single, round headed, light to each side, with marginal coloured glazing. Continuous hood mould”.

Undoubtedly, the most informative source has been publications by the Historic group and a memory stick provided by one of the group, which has provided useful background information on the establishment of Wooldale Chapel and the wider local history of Methodism in the area, contributing to our knowledge of both the physical and social history and context of the building.

Particular notes of thanks for their assistance during the research project, must be given to the Holmfirth Historic Society for their assistance with locating and providing access to the records held on the building; to unnamed member of Historical Society, for providing local knowledge and “recent” (20th Century) photographic evidence of the building, through his meticulous records on the village.

This report has remained a live document throughout the project, from the initial pre-design stages and feasibility stages and then on to the subsequent design work.

- 1.4 The resultant proposal designs are prepared following consultation and discussions with Messrs A. Bennett & L. Lockwood who, having bought the building in 2022, at auction, wish to convert the former Methodist Chapel into residential use, for occupation by themselves and young children.
- 1.5 Most of the external fabric of the existing building is in a reasonable condition. The walls are sound (albeit pointed in an unfortunate cement mortar); the roof appears water-tight. A concrete block and render flat roofed extension was added to the rear of the building in the 1970’s. The rainwater goods require overhaul. The windows are in a very poor state of repair, particularly those to the front and rear of the building, which have fallen victim to water ingress and will require full replacement. The principal doors are in a reasonable condition, albeit, requiring some TLC.
- 1.6 Initial pre-refurbishment investigations have been undertaken of the sub-floor voids where possible. These have been undertaken in isolated locations and do not constitute a full and comprehensive investigation of all areas of the sub-floor voids, which cannot be undertaken without a more complete removal of pews and platforms.

The existing sub-floor construction can generally be taken to be a void, above bare earth, with a suspended timber floor above. The pew platforms are built off dry-stone sleeper walls running North-to-South, with voids between, down to (approximately) that same level. The raised pulpit to the north end is similarly a raised timber floor over an earth-based floor void.

2.0 Asset Summary Description:

2.1 General photos of the building's interior and exterior can be seen in Appendix A.

2.2 Building:	Wooldale Methodist Chapel
Listing Status:	Grade II (List No.1313627)
Parish Council:	Holme Valley Parish Council
Local Authority:	Kirklees
District Council:	Kirklees Council
Conservation Area:	Wooldale (no Conservation Area Appraisal exists)

2.3 The Chapel space has seating, raising slightly to the rear, with fixed pews. There is an open plan vestry to the front and an open plan school room to the right.

The albeit sagging considerably/damaged, white plaster ceiling in the schoolroom has been damaged over the years by water ingress and the addition of a suspended ceiling and under-draws a trussed timber frame roof structure above, containing some historic timbers.

The ceiling in the vestry is partially missing due to water ingress, there is evidence of partial repairs using brown plaster and under-draws a trussed timber frame roof structure above, containing some historic timbers. The ceiling within the chapel has signs of cracking/damp caused by water ingress and under-draws a further trussed timber frame roof structure above, containing some historic timbers. (photo's included within appendix A)

An extension was added to the rear of the building in the 1970's together with small structure to the west corner which houses W/c's.

3.0 Site Location & Description

3.1 Wooldale is a village about 5 miles south of Huddersfield (6 miles by road) and about one mile north east of Holmfirth. Wooldale occupies a hilltop position on the eastern side of the Holme Valley on an old route between Holmfirth and New Mill, the centre of the village being bypassed by the present A635 New Mill Road.



Figure 3.1 - Site Location (Not to Scale)

3.2 While Wooldale is an old village and the centre of one of the old 'townships' of the Holme Valley, it has expanded with much new development around its edges since the latter part of the 20th century. Quakerism came to Wooldale in the 1650s. The Grade II listed meeting house at Pell Lane in the village originally dates from the late 17th century and was repaired and enlarged to its present size in 1783.

3.3 The Chapel itself stands approximately three-quarters up the hillside to Wooldale. The Chapel is accessed by several footpaths.

The Chapel has no vehicular access at present and can only be accessed on foot from Wooldale Road. The village has somewhat of a ramshackle pattern/layout to it, with small footpaths running between the properties and perpendicular (if their circuitous routes can be described as such) to the principle roads.

The Chapel is perched on a prominent site, elevated on a bank, raised above Wooldale Road.



Figure 1.- Close-up Plan (Not to Scale)

3.4 The hillside rises across the site, by more than 1 meter from its low-point on the Northern side, up to its Southern side. A raised, level plateau has been formed immediately to the south of the Chapel forming a garden area, retained by a dry-stone wall.

3.5 There is not known to have been any burials/interments within the grounds of the chapel.

3.6 The wider historical context of Wooldale is explored subsequently in section 4.

4.0 Heritage Statement:

Building History - Generally

- 4.1 The Historic England Listing Description is set out previously.
- 4.2 The following section sets out the history of the building and its significance, architecturally, socially and historically.

The **National Planning Policy Framework (Revised 2021)** defines the term Significance as:

“The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.”¹

It also describes heritage assets as:

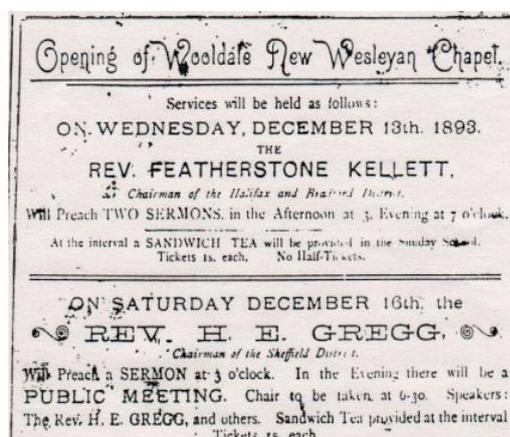
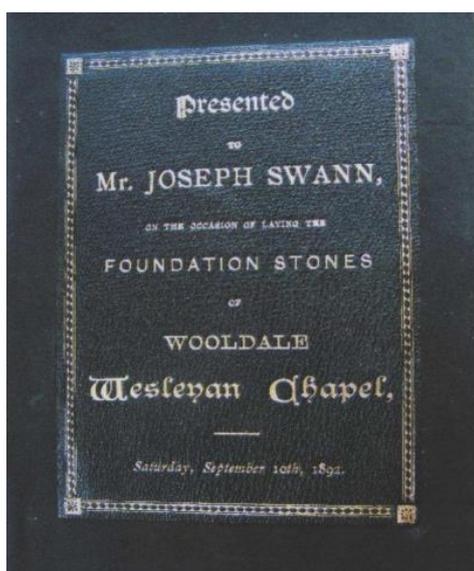
“A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)”

Under that Framework, as part of making an application for Planning Consent and Listed Building Consent, Clause 194 states that applicants are *“to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.”*

This heritage statement, sets out the history and significance of the Heritage Asset, to assist the designers in establishing a strategy for the design of any alterations to the building and the impact on the heritage asset and the Local Planning Authority in determining the subsequent applications.

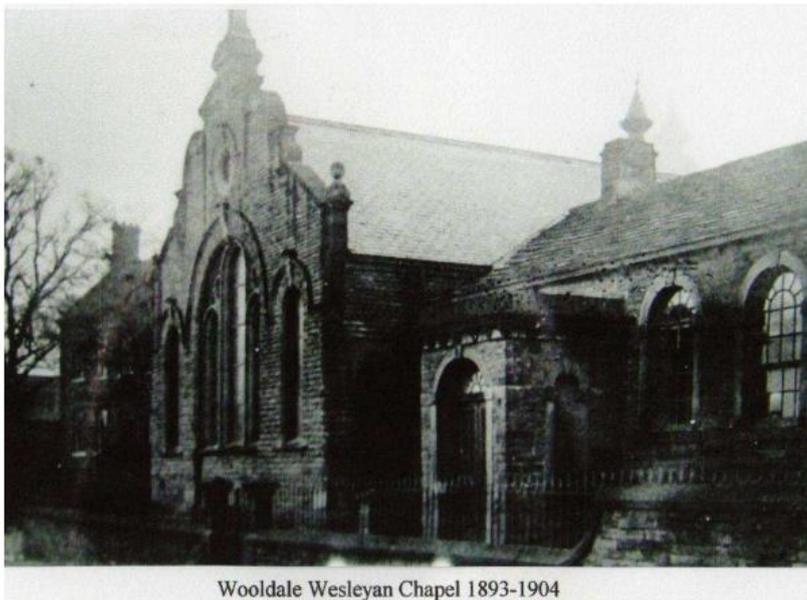
Building History & Detailed Description

- 4.3 There were several applications to build a Sunday school on the site of Wooldale Methodist Chapel. However it was not until 1840 that a successful submission was made for the registering of a building for public worship in the village. This request was signed by Thomas Hill and Joseph Bottomley of Holmfirth and Joseph Turner of Wooldale. Describing themselves “as joint tenants of a cottage in Wooldale” they requested that this be registered as “a place of worship by an assembly or a congregation of Protestant.” It is acknowledged that this was the larger of two cottages on the site of the present chapel in which services were held and Joseph Swann, assisted by Joseph Turner and Joseph Barker, had established a Sunday School. It was recorded that the room was furnished with forms and desks for forty people
- 4.4 An increase in the numbers of those attending the services and the Sunday School soon made the acquisition of larger premises a necessity. It was through the financial help from Benjamin Butterworth, a Merchant Clothier of Holmfirth, and the Wesleyan Chapels of Holmfirth and Hinchcliffe Mill that this was made possible. A barn and mistal adjacent to the Sunday School were purchased from Thomas Morehouse of Spring Bottom, Netherthong in 1846. The old buildings were demolished and the present Sunday School was then built. Known as “a school. The increase in the numbers of those attending the Sunday Services, the Sunday School and weekday activities soon created the need for a further enlargement of the premises. The decisions were then taken that a new Church would be built and that the old School Chapel would accommodate the Sunday School.
- 4.5 On March 5th. 1892 an article in the Holmfirth Express stated there was to be a new Wesleyan Chapel built in the village of Wooldale “as the School has of necessity had to serve as school and chapel, with social gatherings thrown in, it is no matter of surprise that the Wooldale people in order to hold their own in modern times have struck out in this line” The formal application to the Wesleyan Chapel Committee for permission to erect a chapel was dated April 18th 1892, this being signed by the Superintendent of the Circuit, William G. White and three Trustees, Benjamin Butterworth, Albert Bower and James Bower. In support of their application they stated that ninety people regularly attended services of whom twenty six were members and that it was their intention to have one hundred and seventy two sittings, of which sixty would be let, fifty two were to be free and sixty were allocated for Sunday School children. The Stonelaying for the new chapel was held on 10th September 1892. The official opening took place on 13th. December 1893. Celebratory Services were held over the four following Sundays concluding with a rally on January 8th.1894.



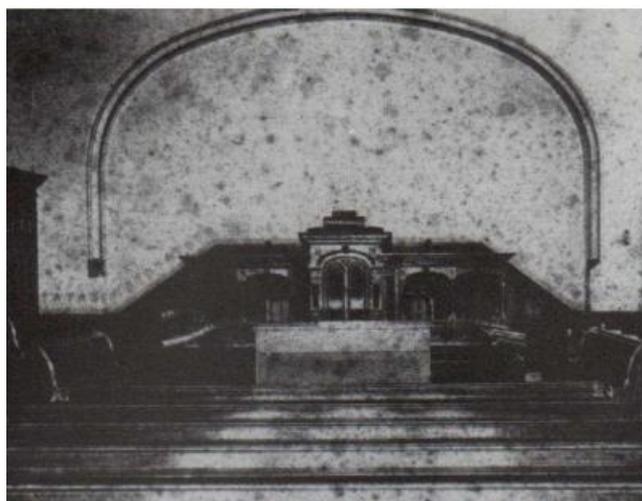
(The intention of the current owners is to name the property Swann House)

- 4.7 During the building work undertaken in the renovations of the premises in 1905 the porch, as it was built originally (shown below), was moved to its present position. These renovations were mainly concerned with improvements to the Sunday Schoolroom. During the ceremony held on January 14th. 1905, having been invited to perform the re-opening of the premises Mr. Heap of Honley was presented with the silver key he had used.



Wooldale Wesleyan Chapel 1893-1904

- 4.8 Congregational hymn singing and choir singing, those essential elements of Chapel worship, were first accompanied by a harmonium. This was replaced in 1903 by an organ purchased from Peter Conacher of Huddersfield. During the following years the original mechanism that worked the organ's bellows (this involving the flow of water achieved by a special motor) was not proving satisfactory so the decision was taken to replace it with a paid organ player. Subsequently in 1932 electric power was installed and in 1973 the organ was fully renovated. In 1933 students from Cliffe College visited Wooldale to lead an evangelistic campaign in the area. After a similar visit the following year it was decided that this initiative was to be supported by the formation of a Mission Band. In 1943 the Chapel was registered for the Solemnisation of Marriage. Prior to this date those wishing to marry had to go to the Wesleyan Church in Holmfirth.



The Chapel in 1903 prior to the installation of the Organ

- 4.9 The school room roof was heightened circa 1904 as part of renovations, this included the inclusion of four tie rods. Further work took place in 1999 when the roof was replaced at the cost of £8000
- 4.10 The ceiling's are a mixture of traditional lath and plaster (dating from the Victorian period) and modern plaster-boarding in the Vectomy, dating from the 1980's. Evidently, the ceiling in the school room has experienced considerable bowing and fallen away in the past. This has been further exuberated by the installation of suspended ceilings. (photos in appendix a).
- 4.11 Under-floor investigations have revealed there to be no visible archaeology/features/floors/etc. hidden beneath. The ground to the underside of the pew platforms and raised timber suspended floor is earth, with a collection of debris from the various alterations over the years.
- 4.12 The existing panelling in the chapel/Vectomy appears to be original due to it being shown in early photographs. The Panelling in the school room is believed to be a later addition due to it covering original features such as the fireplaces.

The timber floors and pew platforms are also subject to considerable decay by suspected wet rot and at present pose a health and safety risk, where large sections have collapsed/rotted through (see photograph below). The building has evidently suffered from moisture ingress for many years



- 4.13 The Church continued to remain a place of worship until 2022, at the start of Covid in 2020 the congregation had fallen to 12. Covid and an ageing congregation caused this to fall further to the point it was not economically viable for the building to continue to be a place of worship.
- 4.14 Records from the mid 1970's onwards revealed that works continued on the chapel including:
- 1974 - flat roof, concrete block and render extension built £8000
 - 1980 - Rear Chapel windows replaced (£602)
 - 1993 - Disabled toilets erected
 - 1998 - Choir pews removed
 - 1999 - Chapel roof re-laid cost £8000
 - 2003 - Chapel carpet £3548 – previous carpet fitted 1962
 - 2006 - Windows spliced £1444
 - 2006 - Vestry tile carpet £646
 - 2007 - Sunday school/ extension rewired to the cost of £7544 plus further £1104 Sunday school extension and toilets.
 - 2008 - New heating system installed in the chapel boiler in the vestry – feeding 20 radiators under the pews. Exterior flu above the roof removed.

- 4.15 The existing timber framed windows date from the Victorian period and there is evidence that the vestry windows to the front elevation were replaced in 2018. There is further evidence showing that the rear chapel windows were replaced in 1980 after a charitable donation. The windows to the front elevation of the school room have also been replaced at some stage as they differ from the boxed sash shown previously. The windows are single glazed throughout. The central glazing in the front elevation of the vestry is believed to be original rose and thistle figured rolled glass, surrounded by coloured glass. Many of these panels have been replaced with modern alternatives and the vast majority are cracked. The distortion within the timber, coupled with the exposure and ongoing neglect, has resulted in the opening up of the joints and deterioration of the decoration and now significant decay of the timber frames, which are beyond salvage or re-use.



Image of Glass & Windows

- 4.16 The front doors are in a reasonable condition, there is some early decay, but none which could not be arrested and decayed timber repaired. These would benefit from being rubbed down and the whole ensemble redecorated.
- 4.17 As noted previously, the pews were introduced into the building in the 1890's extension and refurbishment.

The pews are in reasonable condition (aside from the onset of timber decay at the bases) but are not of particular architectural merit. It is not known what was used for seating within the original Chapel, for the first 50 years, but it could reasonably be assumed that it would be benches or no seating at all (in the very early years. It is noted that Methodism did not rely on even having a building, let alone seating, prior to the erection of a physical building.

Historic Maps

- 4.18 The following maps trace the building throughout the 19th and 20th Century. As can be seen, it changes little in that period (the oldest maps unfortunately post-dating any recorded alterations), as the village slowly builds up around it.



Ordnance Survey 1886 (shows the original three buildings)



Wooldale Ordnance survey 1903 (shows the school house and Chapel)

Wider Context of Wooldale

- 4.19 As noted previously, the Chapel resides within the Conservation Area of Wooldale. No Appraisal exists for the Conservation Area.
- 4.20 The village contains many historical sites, with twelve located on Wooldale Road itself and many more within the Conservation Area, including Wooldale Hall.

- 4.21 Wooldale was anciently called Wolves-dale, from its abounding with wolves. The manufacture of woollen cloth was carried on extensively.

Heritage Significance

- 4.22 The significance of the Chapel has been assessed following the previously described in-depth research and study of the building and historical records. The NPPF definition of significance is given at section 4.3 and somewhat more concisely by the Historic England (or English Heritage) publication, *Conservation Principles*, as “*The sum of the cultural and natural heritage values of a place*”², going on to state that significance must be understood through six key areas:

- *who values the place, and why they do so;*
- *how those values relate to its fabric;*
- *their relative importance;*
- *whether associated objects contribute to them;*
- *the contribution made by the setting and context of the place;*
- *how the place compares with others sharing similar values.”*

Guidance such as the Historic England publications “*Conservation Principles*”, “*The Setting of Heritage Assets*” and the Government’s supplementary planning document “*Planning Practice Guidance: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.*” all offer further guidance on the assessment of historic significance.

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).”

The significance of Wooldale Methodist Chapel as part of the Methodist Church community in Kirklees is clear. The chapel has far out-lived that of the many Methodist Chapel’s in other nearby village, which closed some years ago and have since been converted to dwellings. There have also been several other Methodist Chapels which have struggled and eventually closed in surrounding villages over the last eighteen months.

The endurance and strength of the Wooldale Chapel is undeniable and its eventual demise is saddening, but an unfortunate symptom of current times, seen across many denominations of faith. The historical social significance of the building is therefore **high**, in terms of the building as a symbol of Methodism in Kirklees and Wooldale.

The position of the Chapel, sited upon the hillside is one of visual and practical importance. Its prominent location (at close range) makes it visually dominant against the surrounding domestic properties.

While its position can by no means be described as accessible or on a principle access route, it is located within the heart of the developing residential area of the village of its time, positioned to be convenient for those living nearby, as the housing development progressed up the hill.

The significance of the building’s physical appearance within the village is **high** to the North. The symmetry and prominence of the front elevation is one to be preserved and altered as little as possible. The significance of the South, east and west is somewhat reduced and could not be considered any more than **medium-low**.

The physical Chapel evidently derives from numerous periods in time, as it has evolved and expanded to accommodate the changing needs of the worshipping congregation. However, the significance of the building in its present form, and complete external composition, is also of **high significance**. The external appearance has changed little since chapels opening in the 1890’s and it is this which we would seek to retain (and, where possible, enhance) and preserve, retaining an awareness of the older elements of fabric.

The interior of the building is simple and unpretentious and little ornament exists.

The only internal “features” of particular historical note are the pews, On their own they are **low-medium** significance.

It is the intention of the new Owners to retain several of the pews within the converted building, but that the others should be sold/re-distributed, to enable the Chapel’s conversion.

5.0 Planning History/Context

5.1 There are no known historical planning applications for the chapel or surrounding site.

As noted previously, the building is Listed at Grade II and sits within the Wooldale Conservation Area. As such, the building is both considered to be of architectural and historical significance and will be subject to the restrictions imposed by that statutory protection. Similarly, the historical and environmentally sensitive surroundings of the Kirklees area, will result in increased restriction on unreasonable and unsustainable development and alteration.

5.2 Any works of conversion/alteration/etc. will be required to comply with local, regional and national planning policy.

5.3 At the time of writing, any works to convert the building into residential use will require full Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent to be obtained from Kirklees Council. The building, having been sold into private ownership and no longer under the ownership and/or management of the Methodist Church, no longer falls under the Ecclesiastical Exemption Act.

Seeking the necessary Statutory permissions will likely include consultations with archaeological bodies, Amenities Societies, such as the Victorian Society and Historic England, the Local Authority Highways Authority, Fire Authority and Refuse Collection Body and also local groups/Parish Council.

5.4 Building Regulations will be required to be sought for the alterations. This can be obtained from The Kirklees Council or via an Approved Inspector.

5.5 The change of use of the building must be justified against any possible sustainable retention as a more favoured use, commensurate to its historic use (see Section 7.0).

5.6 The property was not highly sought after when put to auction, indicating no wider interest in putting the building to an alternative use. Regardless of any such level of interest. An alternative community use would only be a viable option if it could be a sustainable use (see Appendix B, which considers possible alternative uses)

6.0 Heritage Impact Assessment (of Proposals)

6.1 The following is to be read in conjunction with the Design & Access Statement and accompanying Architect's drawings

6.2 Externally:

The proposals have been prepared to have as minimal impact on the existing exterior of the building as possible. The proposals include for the **repointing** of stone copings and **repair** of damaged stonework, slipped slates and deteriorated rainwater goods; all to be undertaken to preserve the existing, according to good conservation principles.

Heritage Impact:

Cumulatively, these will have a positive impact on the heritage of the building due to the exterior appearing in a good state of repair, with some damaged and/or missing elements restored. A significant net gain to the heritage of the building will be achieved. This is not only in the continued preservation of an historic asset by its continued viable use and maintenance, but also symbolic to the community of the continuation and preservation (albeit in an alternative use) of a significant community building.

6.4 The demolition of the 1970's extension allows for the creation of further outdoor space.

Heritage Impact:

The extension is of no historical significance and thus will have no significant impact. The demolition of the extension will not have a detrimental impact on the building externally, resulting in no harm.

6.5 It is proposed to install an **Air Source Heat Pump** to the extreme South-West corner of the site, away from the building. This will not be visible and will be screened from view by a timber boarded enclosure and planting..

Heritage Impact:

The distance from the Chapel, against the stone outcrop to the South-West corner of the site, screened from view to appear little more than a shed or garden store will not impact on the setting of the building.

6.6 It is proposed to re-instate the metal railings to the perimeter of the front.

Heritage Impact:

The re-instatement of the railings will have a very positive impact on the existing building..

6.7 The removal of the shrubs and landscaping of the surrounding garden area will provide easier access, greater use and open up the existing building more.

Heritage Impact:

The opening up of the site by removing the existing shrubs will reveal the existing space.

The re-landscaping of the site is proposed to be done so as to have minimal impact on the existing context of the building, but will facilitate better maintenance and use of the building, as opposed to its present hard-to-access surroundings and viable use as the building is used for residential purposes.

Windows & Doors:

6.8 The **windows** are, as previously recorded, beyond economical repair and are proposed to be replaced. The proposals are to replace the existing windows with new timber units, with slim line double glazing.

Retention as single glazing is thermally inefficient for residential (or any modern) use, particularly considering the size and number of windows. New timber casements are proposed to replace the existing decayed windows with slim glazing bar profiles to be maintained and the opening hopper lights to be retained (in the design, albeit new) and functional, which would otherwise be impractical with secondary glazing. This allows for ventilation throughout the building to be achieved, to enable the building to breathe and additional apertures not required through the existing historic fabric to achieve said ventilation.

The windows are proposed to be painted black/dark grey externally, to match the originals from 1904 and black/dark grey internally

Heritage Impact:

While the removal of the timber windows does result in the loss of historic fabric, they are beyond economical repair and as such, their replacement is unavoidable. Once lost, their replacement with single glazing is unrealistic and unfeasible for windows of such size and number to allow the building to be beneficially brought into residential (or other) use.

The glass will (if at all feasible) be re-used in the new windows.

Provision of single glazed units with secondary glazing, we would suggest would result in greater reflection behind the windows, affecting the external appearance and render the opening hoppers unusable. Timber casements with slim-line double glazing offer the environmental benefits while preserving the appearance of the building and operation of the opening hoppers.

- 6.9 The external **doors** are proposed to be repaired and redecorated.

Heritage Impact:

The redecoration of the doors will have a positive impact on the building.

- 6.10 The new internal floor installations and layout are fundamentally designed around the existing **window openings** and the existing space.

Forming double height spaces around the windows allows natural light to penetrate deeper into the plans, while avoiding dissection of the windows where possible.

The positioning and angling of internal screens, steps and landings avoids over-looking the neighbouring properties, while capitalising on the views across the Village and Valley to the North and East.

Heritage Impact:

The proposed internal alterations have zero impact on the heritage or significance of the existing windows and we would argue that by allowing greater appreciation of the views and maximising the use of natural light in the context of the conversion works, has a positive impact (albeit not heritage). Consideration was given to creating the bedrooms in the existing roof void, but this was not feasible due to the number of roof trusses.

- 6.11 It is proposed to install 3 no. **rooflights** on the principal east & south roof slope. These are designed to be small in scale, to provide natural light to the Second Floor Bedrooms. Positioned on the east roof slope the windows will not be visible from either of the Chapel's principle elevations.

It is also proposed to install a flue to the stove in the South roof slope. The toilet block to the west is currently a felt flat roof. This is to be retained.

Heritage Impact:

The rooflights and flue will be visible from the Southern/eastern approach to the building, however the building does not maintain an appearance of a Chapel from that direction, instead, it is very much blending into the surrounding building-scape, as it always has, so the context of the rooflights is no different from simply being installed in a domestic roof. Many surrounding properties also contain rooflights and chimneys/flues and are of similar scale and nature of the Chapel. The flue will be in the same position as the chimney that previously abutted the chapel and school room

It is not, therefore felt that this will impact negatively upon the heritage of the building.

Internally:

- 6.12 Internally, the **pew platforms**, dating from the Victorian period are decaying due to the damp. Their retention is not feasible from an ongoing health and safety perspective, nor for practical reasons. Appendix C considers alternative uses for the building, few of which would involve the retention of the pew platforms and those that would be simply not economically viable uses (for which they would have to be to be sustainable).

Heritage Impact:

The Chapel, its ministry and the ministry of the wider Methodists pre-existed, highly successfully in Wooldale, prior to the erection of any physical building, which did not rely on seating, pews or a hierarchical arrangement of the congregants, nor does historical record seem to indicate any detriment for this. The early preaching on this site outdoors did not require pews or fixed seating and it is highly unlikely that the early forms of the Chapel (as set out in Section 4.0) would have been equipped with anything but rudimentary benches. The pews are evidently a Victorian intervention and while true they contribute to the Victorian composition of the building, they cannot be suggested to be inherently linked to the success or ongoing preaching of Methodism in the village.

The pews are not of particular architectural or historic note in their physical form and the significance of them should not be inflated at the detriment of the wider building's viable use and sustainable preservation in the future.

The impact of the loss of the decayed original historic flooring is significantly outweighed by benefits brought to the project by the then possibility of installing a practical floor, to allow the building to be brought into beneficial use. Failure to do so considerably prohibits the any viable future use of the building.

*The benefits of removal of the pew platforms on **health and safety** grounds and in terms of allowing beneficial use of the building and thus giving it a future of re-use and maintenance far outweighs the loss of the already decaying fabric of the platforms.*

- 6.13 Similarly, the **existing floors** (excluding the pew platforms and dais) are suffering from decay and damp – the underside of the boards being damp. The proposals include for the laying of a new insulated concrete floor to avoid this problem and allow the building to be brought into beneficial use.

Heritage Impact:

The majority of the existing floors originate from later interventions. The removal, therefore will have no impact on the heritage of the building. It is hoped that some of the flooring can be salvaged to be used in the proposed mezzanine levels.

- 6.14 The removal of the **pews** themselves (with the exception of those being retained) is necessary for sheer practicality purposes. As far as we know, the pews hold no major significance, except contributing to the whole current interior composition, which is to change anyway, and are not of particular architectural or artistic high

quality. The proposals include for the retention of at least four pews. (to be used as dining table seating & seating within the vestry)

Heritage Impact:

The benefits of removal of the pews and thus allowing beneficial use of the building (rather than allowing them to remain and decay) far outweighs the loss of the fixtures, which are not believed to hold any high historic or architectural significance. Retention of some pews retains the connection with the current Chapel and the remaining pews might be relocated elsewhere in the community or sold. Their retention would threaten the whole future viable use of the building.

- 6.15 The existing **ceiling's** in the chapel are a mixture of plaster and lath and modern plaster and is to be retained. A small opening is to be formed for the bedroom staircases up to their Second Floor's within the roof void. The existing ceilings within the Vestry and schoolroom are to be replaced with plasterboard as they are beyond repair

Heritage Impact:

The significance of the ceiling is more in its contribution to the volume of the building, rather than the actual historic material contained within the ceiling (although the remaining plaster lath elements are presumed to be Victorian). The ceiling's is a combination of plaster lath and modern plasterboard. Its retention in the main Chapel will have a positive impact on the significance of the altered building.

- 6.16 The **internal alterations** are generally set out in the Design Statement, along with the reasoning's, including the preservation of the original double height spaces, where possible, utilising natural light while avoiding the dissection of existing windows or the necessary installation of excessive additional windows and the positioning of spaces where natural light through pre-existing windows is less forthcoming. The erection of a steel mezzanine will be constructed from steel to enable the formation of bedrooms, with natural light that does not impact on the current external appearance of the chapel

Heritage Impact:

This allows for the space to work as a dwelling but also be returned to its former use in the future. It also keeps the open plan nature of the ground floor, as to sub divide the ground floor of either the church or the school room for bedrooms would detract from its previous open plan use.

The introduction of the Mezzanine Levels and working the access to the upper levels around the existing features to not only simply to avoid existing obstacles but respond and enhance appreciation of them all contributes to the internal spaces and how they are used.

- 6.22 The removal of the **organ** wall we believe will have a positive impact on the interior of the building as it was a later addition that is costly to maintain and hides the original wall mosaic

Heritage Impact:

The chapel did not originally contain an organ and the presence of the plasterwork/mosaic behind would support the image of the internal decoration being of a much simpler nature. As such, the proposal to remove it will restore the building to its former simpler interior space and thus contribute to the conservation of the original space. It will also enable the altar to be returned to its original position under the decorative arch.

- 6.23 The **sub-division of the internal spaces** has been minimised as far as possible. The minimal sub-division of the ground floor is essential for the building to have a viable use. The building's sub-division into fewer bedrooms

makes such an endeavour economically unviable and this it will simply not happen, resulting in further decay (see Appendix B) if a viable use cannot be achieved.

In plan, over half of the internal volume remains undivided and over a third in section remains “open” double height space, which is a huge compromise by the present owners, and representative of their commitment to honouring and preserving the building’s internal qualities.

Heritage Impact:

The subdivision has been kept to a fair minimum as could reasonably be asked, without compromising the viability of the endeavour of converting the building into a viable and sustainable use. The spaces are not over-divided, nor excessively developed to result in the whole building becoming small spaces. The floor plans have been developed to retain over 50% as open plan (more so at Ground Floor level, with approximately 40% open to maintain the double height spaces (when taking the cantilevered Mezzanine into consideration). The proposals respect the existing volume and preserve that in a large proportion of the building, but viable re-use and compromise must be taken into account. Open plans (particularly Bedrooms and Bathrooms) for a building this size is simply not practical and an appropriate number of Bedrooms needs to be provided to make the expense of any project to repair the historic building viable.

The impact of the division of the building is perhaps the most significant element of the proposals, but also the most critical element, defining whether the project is viable for the owners or not.

Ultimately, the internal walls are proposed to be removable, leaving little impact on the existing fabric, therefore their impact might be the most significant, but largely reversible.

As well as the practical reasoning for the arrangement, the contrasting geometry with the original building allows a clear differentiation between the old and the new.

- 6.25 The addition of solar panels to the rear south slope of the school room roof to provide environmentally friendly Power, supported by the introduction of an air source heat pump and electric vehicle charging point.

Heritage Impact

There is little impact upon the property aesthetically, due to the south side of the property not being overlooked by residential properties.

7.00 Conclusions

- 7.1 It is set out in planning legislation, in **PPG: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment** that when a building is deemed no longer viable for a continuation of its present/intended purpose, a viable alternative use is the most effective way to ensure the preservation of the building, negating the risks of decay:

“In the case of buildings, generally the risks of neglect and decay of heritage assets are best addressed through ensuring that they remain in active use that is consistent with their conservation. Ensuring such heritage assets remain used and valued is likely to require sympathetic changes to be made from time to time.”³

The guidance goes on to reference the **National Planning Policy Framework**, which calls on Local Authorities to “recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance.”⁴ and that the following four points should be taken into account:

1. *“the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation”*

The significance, both architecturally, socially and historically of the building is set out previously and is clear defined. It should be noted that the building is of only Grade II Listing and that the listing description makes no mention of the internal features of the building (such as the pews, organ or altar). Instead the focus is on the exterior.

The desirability of preserving the building is clear and the proposals include for the preservation of the physical exterior of the building and its context in the main and certainly its enhancement in several different ways (set out previously).

2. *“the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;”*

Similarly, this is discussed previously, but the social connection between the chapel and the local community, as well as its wider social relevance would not be harmed by the proposed conversion. The chapel is already closed to the public, which could be said to have caused the most “social harm” in so far as the building was no longer accessible to the public, but its presence as a symbol remains; so, it is little worsened by transfer to private ownership and the proposed use. At the time of closure, the congregation was small and not open in between services, thus it cannot be said to have been widely continuing to bring social/community benefit by its use as a church at that time.

Allowing the property to continue to further decay through lack of alternative viable use, however, would result in harm to its social significance in the perceived deterioration of the physical building.

There have been multiple studies into the effects of the built historic environment on people’s sense of place*, which clearly set out the benefits of its viable re-use in promoting that sense of place.

3. *“the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and”*
4. *opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.”*

The continued maintenance and upkeep of the heritage asset is unquestionably beneficial to the local area and as proven by the aforementioned studies, continues to contribute to local character.

The **National Planning Policy Framework** goes on to state that:

“...sustaining heritage assets in the long term often requires an incentive for their active conservation. Putting heritage assets to a viable use is likely to lead to the investment in their maintenance necessary for their long-term conservation.”

It goes on to state that:

“By their nature, some heritage assets have limited or even no economic end use.” and that “It is important that any use is viable, not just for the owner, but also the future conservation of the asset. It is obviously desirable to avoid successive harmful changes carried out in the interests of repeated speculative and failed uses.”

The viable use of the building for the current owners is residential use. A community use is highly unlikely to be able to achieve economic viability in that context and is simply of no benefit to the present owners. An assessment of possible alternative uses is set out subsequently in Appendix B, (which should be read in conjunction with the rest of this report) which clearly identifies a single residential dwelling as being the only viable use for the building, following its discontinuation as a Place of Worship.

Any possible alternative uses would be equally or more harmful to the existing building than residential use. Thus: *“If there is only one viable use, that use is the optimum viable use. If there is a range of alternative viable uses, the optimum use is the one likely to cause the least harm to the significance of the asset, not just through necessary initial changes, but also as a result of subsequent wear and tear and likely future changes.”*

Residential use is therefore determined as the only and most viable use of the building for the owner and the future conservation of the asset.

In realising that optimum use, the **NPPF** goes on to summarise that *“Harmful development may sometimes be justified in the interests of realising the optimum viable use of an asset, notwithstanding the loss of significance caused provided the harm is minimised.”*

There is little harm proposed to be caused by the conversion works. The exterior of the building is to remain principally the same or significantly enhanced through repair (aside from the addition of rooflights, a flue and the heat pump/ev charger) and the interior works are proposed to be mainly reversible. It is true that the pews and Organ will require removal and thus its loss; however, no realistic viable use would result in their retention. As such, their loss is unquestionably justified by the benefit achieved in their removal. Their retention would be detrimental to the ongoing preservation of the historic building.

The **NPPF** states the criteria for justifying substantial harm to heritage assets. We would assert that the proposals could in no way be described as substantial harm, but that those criteria for justifying any substantial harm are all met, as evidenced throughout this document.

More appropriately for this case it states that:

“Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.”

This document sets out a balancing of the any harm against the wider public benefit.

We have proven residential use to be the only viable use and as such entirely in line with the local planning policy. Wooldale Chapel is a textbook example of the decay of a heritage asset, being left unmaintained and any delays in progressing the conversion to viable use would exacerbate the problem further.

- 7.2 We believe that the overall scheme of alteration responds to all key historical and architectural features identified in the Chapel, through this Heritage Statement, enhancing where possible and where not, at least resulting in no net loss of heritage significance.
- 7.3 With the exception of the pews and organ, the proposals for the internal alterations are generally removable and reversible.

- 7.4 The proposals encourage the users to engage with the existing building in what it has to offer, often in ways that are simply not possible in its current form. The occupants can live within the sometimes-challenging parameters set by that original structure and its Architectural and historic features and overall results in an architecturally exciting space, providing a modern and contemporary interior without impacting on the exterior of the building.
- 7.5 We believe that the proposals reflect a sympathetic response to the building and the need for an alternative sustainable use for the building to ensure that its continued preservation can be safeguarded.

Appendix A

The following points have been identified in relation to the buildings history.

1840 – Sunday schools were held in the larger of the two cottages on the site of the present chapel. Joseph BARKER, TURNER and SWANN founded the school and held office of School Superintendent

1846 – Land and buildings purchased for £150 (some records £40)

1848 – Sunday School build at a cost of £200. Building referred to as school Chapel.

1848- 1890 - Early days there was a fireplace at each end of the Sunday school – but later replaced by a big stove in the centre. Two chandeliers each holding three candles. Inner porch made of wood?

During this period several alterations

- New pulpit installed
- Palisade fencing and gate
- New exterior porch
- Ceiling installed in 1864

New Chapel building committee – Tenders for the build of an attached Chapel to the school – Total £725

Design includes section of sliding doors to open on events so the whole of the school can be added

1982 – Stone Laying 10/09/1892

Opening Wednesday December 13th 1893

1899 reopening 11/06/1899 – Minor alterations to the pulpit and premises were redecorated.

09/09/1903 – Consent granted to installation of Organ £200, Organ changed to electric in 1832. 1973 Overhauled lowered in pitch at a cost of £900.

1903-1910

Renovation of school building – 09/09/1904

- New roof Timber
- New window
- New floor and stage
- Porch work
- Moving complete porch
- Tie rods installed and walls increased in height

Grand reopening January 1905

1918 Vestry windows made by Booth and Garside

1918 Chapel windows fitted by Booth and Garside

1922 Painting and decorating of chapel

1945 communion rail installed from Former high street Chapel in Huddersfield

First outside Toilets built in 1953. Cost £339

1958/ 1962 -images of existing rear wall, cladding and large curtain along wall? Covering the sliding doors

1974 extension built £8000

1980 – Rear Chapel windows replaced (£602)

1993 - Disabled toilets erected

1998 Choir pews removed

1999 – Chapel roof re-laid cost £8000

2003 – Chapel carpet £3548 – previous carpet fitted 1962

2006 – Windows spliced £1444

2006 – Vestry tile carpet £646

2007 – Sunday school/ extension rewired to the cost of £7544 plus further £1104 Sunday school extension and toilets.

2008 – New heating system installed in the chapel boiler in the vestry – feeding 20 radiators under the pews. Exterior flu above the roof removed.

Boot (presumed 1893) found under the floor during the installation of the heating system 2008.

Cost of heating system £8589

School Room

This room currently comprises of a large open area with one church Pew. A staged area with sliding doors into the kitchen/ dining area, with two full length cupboards on either side. Double doors lead from the vestibule area and large double doors lead from the porch/ toilet area. A large single door leads to the toilet area. A ramp leads from the vestibule to the floor.

There are four large wooden windows with a mixture of transparent and opaque glass.

Wooden floor.

Wooden cladding on three of the four walls.

Upon removal of suspended ceiling a centre 'vent' and side wall decorative panels were discovered.

Metal bracing was also present, with one appearing to have been replaced with wooden battens.

Wall's plastered in cement plaster



Images showing damage to ceiling plasterwork.



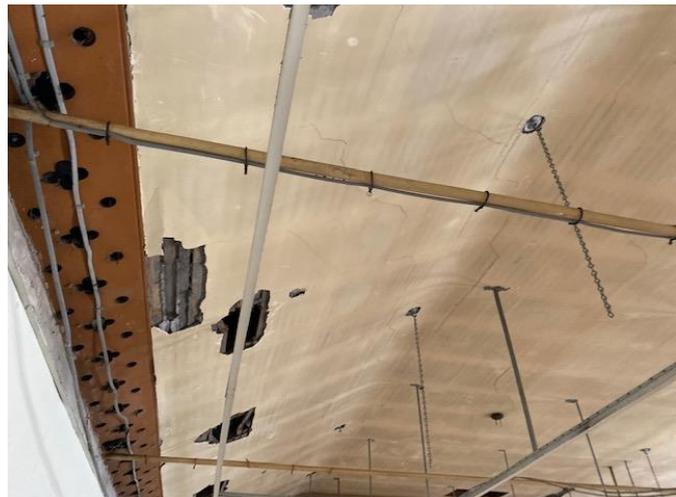


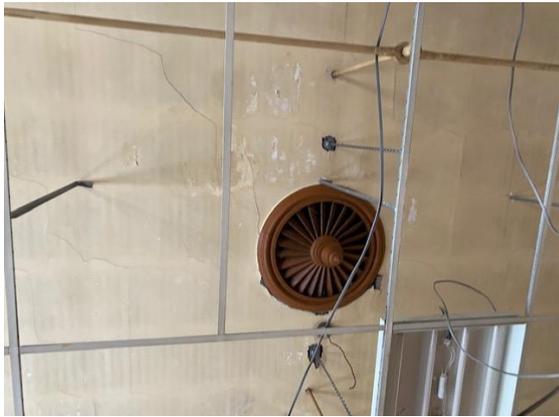
Figure 1 - School room Auction image



Figure 2 - School Room Auction image.







Toilets

Large single door, leads to a small sink area with a large disabled toilet and sink to the right. To the left are two urinals with a small toilet room to the far side.





Kitchen/ Dining area

1970's extension with flat roof/ suspended ceiling. UPVC windows and suspected original kitchen units.

Entrance/ Hallway

Large wooden door leads into a small entrance area, with window to the left.

This leads into a further entrance area with doors to the vestry (Left) vestibule (front) and school room (double doors to the right)

Vestry

Large open room with original cladding, church windows two large entry doors and small kitchenette.



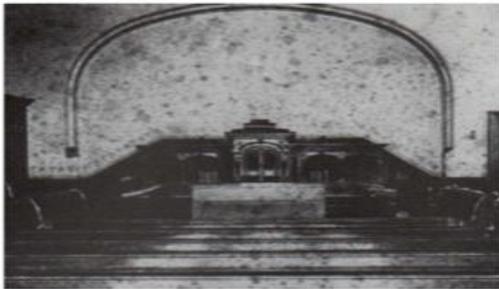


Church

20 pews (2 sizes), pipe organ, Wooden Vestibule and panelled entry. Large stained windows (x3) to the rear of the room. Two internal windows (originally external) and 6 large windows running along the left side. One internal door. Wooden floor with carpets in areas. Raised platform to the front.







75

The Chapel before the organ was installed in 1903

Congregational hymn singing and choir singing, those essential elements of Chapel worship, were first accompanied by a harmonium. This was replaced in 1903 by an organ purchased from Peter Conacher of Huddersfield. During the following years the original mechanism that worked the organ's bellows (this involving the flow of water achieved by a special motor) was not proving satisfactory so the decision was taken to replace it with a paid organ player. Subsequently in 1932 electric power was









Appendix B – Alternative Uses Feasibility Study

The proposals for the residential development of the former Methodist Chapel have been developed in consideration of the Historic England Guidance **New Uses for Former Places of Worship 2010 (Updated 2012)**. This sets out a three-stage plan for managing change to and change of use of a former place of worship.

1. Understanding the Historic Place of Worship.

A rigorous research project has been undertaken to establish an understanding of the history of the Chapel, its significance and the contribution it makes to the community – See section 4.0.

2. Identifying Appropriate New Uses.

The fundamental principle underlying the proposed residential conversion of the building is to preserve the building by identifying a viable use (in this case residential) which will ensure the building is retained in a good state of repair. Historic England sets out that:

“Keeping historic buildings in use is the best way of making sure they stay in good repair. When a place of worship becomes redundant, for whatever reason, proposed new uses should be considered against the standard of the optimum viable use, i.e. a use that is capable of providing the most sustainable future for the building with the least harm to its heritage values”

Continued use as a **place of worship** is undeniably not a viable future solution. The Church has been sold by the Methodist Church as no longer a viable worship space. The Methodist church has another place of worship in the village, and local villages play host to several other places of worship, which, within 10 minutes travel, are easily accessible and an additional place of worship within Wooldale would not be practical or required. It was placed on the open market and we are not aware of any other Church denominations expressing any interest in the building as an alternative place of worship. The low sale cost of the building, at auction, is indicative of the lack of interest in the building and therefore the new owners should be commended on their vision for and investment in the building.

Limiting Factors:

Several prevailing limiting factors which would affect the viable re-use of the building:

Location:

The building has the benefit of being located within the centre of the village, albeit positioned halfway up the hill. It is central to the village for community use.

Access:

The building has only pedestrian access and limited access for wheelchairs/buggies/those of limited mobility.

Parking:

The building has no parking of its own and there is very limited parking on adjacent streets meaning any conversion to a use that would attract external visitors/users would create considerable parking difficulties and congestion of the very narrow roads. Therefore, any realistic use is confined to local use – i.e. those who can walk.

Volume:

The Historic England guidance cites the term “Single Vessel Use”; which indeed is the most appropriate way for the building of this nature to be retained in terms of preserving its historical significance. However, this must be weighed up against economic viability and the impact such “single vessel use” would have on the local infrastructure. In this case; the benefits of retaining it as such a volume are outweighed by the limitations on the possibility of being able to create an economically viable space.

Alternative Uses:

Several **community uses** might be considered appropriate for the building; however, fundamentally the building was offered to local communityGroups for community use and it was decided not to take the building over from the Methodist Circuit.

The volume of the space is conducive to several possible community uses, such as community **cinema, hall, post office, performance space, events space**, even **sports room**, etc. However, the village already has a village Hall for these purposes, which is more centrally located and better served by parking and access. For such a building to be used as a community facility and to remain viable it would have to be used most days of the week. For a small village, two village halls is simply unviable and would result in either the detriment of one or considerable ongoing maintenance costs being sought to keep them both running. It would simply be unviable.

It has been suggested that the space could be used for **community storage**, however, this would suffer even greater problems of being economically viable and while it would not necessarily result in as great an intervention being required to make it usable for such, this cannot in all sensible discussions be considered a more appropriate use. It would also require considerable funding being sought just to make the space suitable for this use, which would result in considerable intervention to combat the damp problems from below the floor.

For the building to be successful on a **commercial** scale, either for **business** or **hospitality/multiple occupancy holiday lets**, such as **bunkrooms**, its subdivision to a greater degree than is proposed for residential would in most cases need to be considered to ensure economically viable use of the building. As noted below, there is no parking or vehicular access so its use for commercial purposes would either be restricted to local business (i.e. owners live in the village) or result in increased congestion on the adjacent roads. Similarly, there is little viable amenity space for bins (accessible for collection) or storage.

Even if over-come, a commercial use of the building could rarely be deemed a “more appropriate” use of the building; offering as it would, no benefit over residential conversion.

Greater density **residential use** including, possibly, **affordable housing**, could be considered. However, again this results in a greater degree of subdivision of the building than private single residential use and would, again result in considerable increases in traffic and parking to adjacent streets.

3. Conclusions:

The Methodist Church deemed the building no longer viable as a place of worship for their congregation; a decision only they can realistically make. Beyond that, retaining the building for acts of worship by any other denomination is the most desirable, but simultaneously the most unviable, considering the small community and the proximity of other villages.

Before the property was sold into private ownership, the local community was offered the opportunity to adopt the building and elected not to, on account of it not being required and the economical restrictions on being able to put it to a viable use. The property has therefore been offered to a wider audience to find a viable alternative community/commercial use.

The present owners have the vision to see that viable use as residential, which would see the building brought back into beneficial use and most importantly, the historic building repaired and retained in an “good state of repair.” The present owners do not have need for another use and therefore if they are unsuccessful in obtaining permission to convert the building into residential use, they will be forced to sell the building. The property was sold at Auction in 2022 for a small amount of money on account of the lack of interest by any potential purchasers, presumably due to the problems identified above. The building has fallen into a poor state of repair in the short time it has been empty and its re-sale would inevitably result in a further prolonged period of time

when it would be derelict and continue to fall into disrepair – this assuming any new purchaser can be found with endless finance to convert it to another use with the ongoing financial burden of doing so.

The residential conversion of the building offers it the only viable future and so this should be strongly encouraged, to ensure that the building is preserved for future generations. Failure to support this endeavour will condemn the building to further decay and deterioration, perhaps to a state beyond any viable future economical use. The use for a residential dwelling is perhaps not the ideal use to preserve the interior from a purely conservation perspective; however, the proposals are broadly reversible and certainly the single nature volume of the space could be easily restored in the future if a viable alternative use was found. The proposals are prepared in accordance with the guidance offered in the third stage of the Historic England Guidance **3**.

Alterations & Additions for New Uses.

Additional residential development within Wooldale is challenging and so the re-use of a beautiful, historic building, where no alternative viable use is available, should be strongly encouraged, and is so in Local Planning Policy

The proposals preserve a large proportion of the open volume (as can economically be done so) and are prepared to respect the historic building and enhance it. The harm caused by the change of use is significantly outweighed by benefits brought to the building and surrounding area.