

Nicola Gunn

From: Planning
Subject: FW: 3/2020/1056 - Chipping Congregational Church

From: Adrian Dowd
Sent: 25 January 2021 13:09
To: Planning <planning@ribblevalley.gov.uk>
Cc: John Macholc <John.Macholc@ribblevalley.gov.uk>
Subject: 3/2020/1056 - Chipping Congregational Church

John,

Application 3/2020/1056
Chipping Congregational Church

Please note that no recent site inspection has been undertaken.

Significance

Chipping Congregational Church is a Grade II church of 1838 prominently sited within Chipping Conservation Area (it is identified as a Focal Building in the Appraisal). The list description suggests that the SW and NW elevations are principle and the form and arrangement of windows and doors (typical for this building type; reflects internal arrangements) is intrinsic to interest:

“Chapel, 1838. Squared watershot sandstone with sandstone plinth, quoins and square gutter. Each wall is of 2 bays, having windows with glazing bars, plain stone surrounds with semi-circular heads, keystones and radiating glazing bars. The south-west wall has a door with plain stone surround beneath each window. Between the windows is a plaque: 'PROVIDENCE CHAPEL ERECTED BY SUBSCRIPTION MDCCCXXXVIII'. The north-west (gable) wall has a one-storey porch at its left-hand side, now extended. Its right-hand return wall has a door with plain stone surround and a small window with plain stone surround, semi-circular head and keystone to its left”.

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1147217>
https://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/downloads/download/3328/chipping_conservation_area

The Chipping Conservation Area Appraisal identifies:

‘Focal Building’ (Townscape Appraisal map);
‘Architectural and historic interest of the conservation area’s buildings, including 24 listed buildings’ (Summary of special interest and Strengths);
‘Independent chapel’ in countryside at the edge of the village (1850 OS map, Origins and historic development);
‘There is very little 20th century development within the conservation area’ (Architectural and historic character);
‘Insensitive alterations to historic buildings spoiling the conservation area’s strong historic character and appearance’; ‘Unco-ordinated road signs by the Sally Well spoiling the well’s appearance’; ‘Tall TV aerials spoiling the historic roofscape’ (Weaknesses);
‘Removal of external electrical wiring and boxes on the Post Office’ (Opportunities);
‘Continuing loss of original architectural details and use of inappropriate modern materials or details. Many of the unlisted, and some of the listed, buildings in the conservation have been adversely affected by the use of inappropriate modern materials or details. Common faults include ... the loss of original panelled front doors and their replacement with stained hardwood, uPVC or aluminium doors; use of garish timber stain on garden gates and garage cladding’ (Threats).

The Chipping Conservation Area Appraisal Management Guidance identifies:

‘Doors and doorways: Original doors should be retained. Their replacement or defacement is often entirely unnecessary. Replacement doors should copy the original in the materials, the detail of the design, and the paint finish. Modern off-the-peg doors are not generally acceptable for use in historic buildings, nor are doors with incongruous design features such as integral fanlights. Unpainted hardwood, stained or varnished softwood, or uPVC doors are rarely suitable. Doorcases, door furniture including hinges, knockers and letter-boxes, foot scrapers, fanlights, pediments, columns, pilasters, cornices, consoles and carved or stucco moulded details should not be removed or mutilated but retained even if the doorway is redundant’.

‘Services: The poorly thought out introduction of services, such as mains electricity, telephone or gas, can be detrimental to the appearance and character of a building. Long runs of surface wiring and any external gas piping should be avoided. Satellite dishes, meter boxes, burglar alarms, security and other floodlighting, video cameras, and central heating and other flues should be located carefully in a visually unobtrusive position away from the principal elevation’.

‘New Development ... Front doors should also be painted timber, again reflecting local historic styles’.

The submitted Heritage Statement identifies:

‘RW Brunskill in ‘Traditional Buildings of Britain’ (2002, pg75) identifies that: ‘The religious fervour of the nineteenth century saw the construction of huge numbers of church buildings for Anglicans, Non-Conformists and Roman Catholics and these... are generally accepted as works of polite architecture though of varying standards. But there was a period from the late seventeenth century to the early nineteenth century in which most Non– Conformists and some Anglicans worshipped in humble, unpretentious buildings fully deserving to be classified as examples of vernacular architecture ... Their use of local materials and adaption of traditional forms meant that the buildings were unobtrusive in communities which might be suspicious of the new forms of worship; architecturally the buildings took their place among the cottages and farmhouses of the village and did not compete with the church on the hill... The outward appearance of the chapel or meeting-house reflects its internal organisation as closely as that of a farmhouse or barn ... Chapels for Unitarians or Congregationalists were little more complicated: there was a single tall meeting room dominated by a pulpit on one long side and with galleries at both ends, sometimes joined opposite the pulpit; externally the long entrance side had two doors, two tall windows and two staircases outside or two windows lighting internal staircases ... building materials were those of the locality and the time’.

‘Listing selection guide: Places of worship’ (Historic England, 2017) identifies:

‘Despite their considerable architectural diversity, Nonconformist chapels have some general physical characteristics in common. Orientation was generally not an issue, so buildings could take full advantage of the site. Striking facades and street frontages are characteristic’.

‘The earliest Dissenting meetings were held in private houses or in buildings converted from other uses and many early chapels continued to resemble domestic buildings well in to the nineteenth century, reflecting both economy and discretion in the face of prejudice. Many were built with the volunteer labour of congregation members. The earliest Nonconformist buildings are generally of modest size, architecturally simple or even vernacular in character and constructed of local materials’.

‘By the end of the seventeenth century a generic meeting house type had emerged. The buildings were all characterised by their simplicity and plainness. Square or more commonly rectangular on plan, chapels were usually longer than they were wide, with galleries on three walls and a prominent pulpit of two or three storeys in the middle of the long wall. A small communion table would be placed in front of the pulpit. Gallery fronts were usually panelled and lower walls were often wainscoted. Simple forms or benches were gradually replaced by box pews. Communion pews positioned close to the pulpit are extremely rare survivors. Gender segregation was common and in larger chapels men and women entered by separate doors. The chapels of all denominations had a minister’s chair. Interior memorials were only gradually admitted in the nineteenth century. Windows were large and plainly glazed until late in the nineteenth century, when stained glass began to appear’.

‘As Nonconformist denominations grew in wealth and self-confidence, especially in urban centres, their buildings acquired greater architectural sophistication. Classicism was popular up to 1860 or even beyond, in part because construction costs were lower but also because it was a means of distinguishing the chapel from the parish church. Thereafter, Gothic was favoured by most denominations, albeit never to the exclusion of other styles. Chapels grew in size and swagger in the second half of the nineteenth century, a period that has been termed the age of the ‘metropolitan show chapel’.

‘Congregationalists were a prosperous denomination and built well finished and well-furnished buildings. By the nineteenth century they were commissioning some of the best architects such as Waterhouse and Butterfield, and by 1851 they claimed 3,244 churches in England and Wales. In the north of England, Congregational chapels of the later nineteenth century even eclipsed the buildings of the Church of England in size and architectural quality’.
<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/dlsg-places-worship/heag124-places-of-worship-lsg/>

Ancient Monument Society comments on 3/2013/0232:

“You would expect a pulpit to lie between two matching windows – ‘pulpit windows’.

Information requirements [see section 10 (2) (b) of the Act]
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/9/section/10>

No information submitted on location and means of attachment to listed building or lighting unit impact. Need to understand impact to historic fabric.
No joiners report submitted identifying the state of repair of the doors.

Conclusions

Windows and doors (including materials and form) are intrinsic to the interest and character of this relatively plain building and reflect how the building was accessed and used inside. No ‘clear and convincing justification’ (see NPPF 194) has been submitted for removal of the historic solid timber doors (can they be repaired/upgraded with draught excluders?). The proposed fully glazed openings are overtly modern, incongruous and conspicuous and harmful to the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building, the character and appearance of Chipping Conservation Area and the cultural heritage of the AONB.

The NW elevation is very plain and is only distinguished by two mid-height symmetric multi-paned windows. The illuminated cross below the apex will draw attention away from this design. The guidance of the Chipping Conservation Area Appraisal Management Guidance appears relevant “satellite dishes, meter boxes, burglar alarms, security and other floodlighting, video cameras, and central heating and other flues should be located carefully in a visually unobtrusive position away from the principal elevation”. The impact to the historic fabric has not been identified. Can the cross be attached to the gable of the modern single-storey extension? Can increased use of the notice-board be made?

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. ‘Preservation’ in the duties at section 16, 66 and 72 of the Act means “doing no harm to” (*South Lakeland DC v. Secretary of State for the Environment* [1992]).
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/9/contents>

NPPG states that “substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases”. The harm to the listed building and conservation area does result in the loss of historic fabric and affects primary elevations. It is ‘less than substantial’ but approaching substantial.

NPPF paragraph 196 requires that ‘less than substantial’ harm be weighed against any public benefits of the proposal.

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