

From: England Hannah <Hannah.England@cornwall.gov.uk>
Sent: 21 June 2019 13:19
To: Info <info@Penzance-tc.gov.uk>
Cc: Olivier Cornelius CC <cornelius.olivier@cornwallcouncillors.org.uk>
Subject: LOCAL COUNCIL PROTOCOL PA19/00190
Importance: High

Dear Sir/Madam,

LOCAL COUNCIL PROTOCOL: PA19/00190 Change of use of a former Methodist Chapel to a single residential dwelling. Richmond Methodist Church Tolver Place Penzance Cornwall TR18 2AB.

Penzance Town Council made the following comments:

“No objection”

Officer response:

In the preamble to policy 4 of the Cornwall Local Plan Strategic Policies 2010 – 2030, the definition of community facilities is described as wide ranging, and including, to name a few, community centres and public halls, arts and cultural facilities, and places of worship. As such, the subject of this application, Richmond Methodist Church, is considered to constitute a community facility in line with policy 4. The policy states:

“Community facilities and village shops should, wherever possible, be retained and new ones supported. Loss of provision will only be acceptable where the proposal shows:

- a. no need for the facility or service;
- b. it is not viable; or
- c. adequate facilities or services exist or the service can be provided in locations that are similarly accessible by walking, cycling or public transport.”

Although it was initially considered that the community no longer had a requirement for the building, it has recently been brought to our attention that a community group have raised interest in purchasing the building. It is therefore considered that the use of the building as a community space and a place of worship may still be viable. With the absence of recent marketing to give evidence in favour for this change of use, together with the said public representation, it cannot be concluded that this community building is no longer viable.

Furthermore, as Richmond Methodist Church is a Grade II Listed Building, the optimum viable use for the building should be secured. Historic England recommended that, should the authority believe that domestic use is the best solution, the creation of a single dwelling unit with minimal physical subdivisions will be the least harmful to the building. In previous advice given by Historic England, it was recommended that school community or office use should be explored prior to the consideration of domestic use.

Paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 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. Where a proposed development 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, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

It is considered that, given that there is community interest in the building, the proposed internal works to the building required to facilitate this change of use are not balanced by the public benefits of the proposal.

It is therefore concluded that this application should be **refused** until evidence of recent marketing has been submitted which proves that there is no need for the facility and no longer is a community use viable. The marketing details should demonstrate that the building has been marketed at market value for a period of 9 months. The level of interest including the amount of offers should also be submitted as part of this evidence.

In light of the above, I would respectfully request that your Council consider the following options as set out within the Protocol For Local Councils:

1. Agree with my recommendation.
2. Agree to disagree.
3. Having made strong planning reasons maintain your objection for the proposal against my recommendation and request that the application is determined by the Planning Committee. In this circumstance it will be important for a representative from your Council to attend and speak at the Planning Committee meeting to enable the Members to fully understand your Council's strong planning reasons for proposing a decision that is contrary to that of the case officer.

Please tell me which option you wish to choose within 5 working days from the date of this communication. It may not always be appropriate to take an application to Committee if the planning position is so clear-cut that it would not be right to make a different decision to the one being recommended. In these rare circumstances we will consult the Divisional Member and explain our reasoning when making the planning decision.

If I do not hear from you within 5 working days, a delegated decision will be issued in accordance with my recommendation.

Kind regards,

Hannah England

Development Officer - Area 2
Planning and Sustainable Development
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