



# Northumberland County Council

## Conservation-Ecology-Archaeology

### MEMORANDUM

**To: Adam Ewart, Planning Officer**

**From: Val Robson, Building Conservation Officer**

**Date: 8/4/2021**

**Reference: 21NP0021**

**Proposal: Replacement Outbuilding and Rear Porch**

**Address: Braefoot, Falstone**

### Significance

The property is situated in close proximity to the grade II listed United Reformed Church. This church was formerly a Presbyterian Church and dates from 1807. It was restored and its distinctive east tower was added in 1876. It is constructed from coursed stone with ashlar dressings and has a Welsh slate roof.

### Legislative Framework and Policy

In providing comments on applications Building Conservation has regard to Section 16 (2) and Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which advise that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

In addition, the NPPF is a material Planning consideration in the assessment of the application.

Section 12 of the 2018 NPPF is about achieving well-designed places.

Paragraph 124 of section 12 advises that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve.

Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

Paragraph 130 of section 12 advises that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area.

In addition, Section 16 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment) of the 2018 NPPF is a material Planning consideration in the assessment of the application.

Paragraph 193 of the NPPF advises 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.

Paragraph 194 advises 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.

Paragraph 195 advises that where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply: a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

Paragraph 196 advises 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, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

Historic England's Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 3 The Setting of Heritage Assets 2015 should also be taken into consideration in the assessment of this proposal.

### **Assessment of Development Proposals**

The proposal is to replace the existing boot room with an enlarged timber porch with a slate roof. It also proposes to replace the existing timber outbuilding with a larger timber garden room.

The site is located in close proximity to the grade II listed United Reformed Church. This church was formerly a Presbyterian Church and dates from 1807. It was restored and its distinctive east tower was added in 1876. It is constructed from coursed stone with ashlar dressings and has a Welsh slate roof.

A Heritage Statement explaining the impact of these proposals on this important heritage asset should be requested to accompany this application.

Notwithstanding this, it is considered that any new porch should be in stone to match the dwelling and not clad in timber. It is unfortunate that it is proposed to replace existing windows with upvc which is an unsustainable material and is not compatible with the historic and architectural significance of the adjacent listed church. The proposed new window to the porch should be vertical in proportion. It would be preferable if the proposed fascia boarding was removed from the scheme and the guttering was affixed using traditional methods. The proposed rooflight should be a vertically proportioned black framed flush fitting Conservation rooflight.

The replacement garden room is larger than the existing shed. However it is single storey and is sited further away from the church than the dwelling. It is not considered that this proposal will cause any substantial harm to the setting of the listed church. However, as part of the Heritage Statement photomontages of the proposed garden room in relation to the church should be submitted so that the two buildings can be viewed together.

## **Conclusion**

Design & Built Heritage consider that a Heritage Statement with accompanying photomontages as outlined in the above report should be submitted for consideration before any consent is granted. It is also considered that amendments to the proposed porch should be sought as outlined above. Any consent granted should include a condition regarding external materials of the porch and the garden room.

**Val Robson**  
**Building Conservation Officer**

