

**DCNC2004/2391/F - SINGLE STOREY EXTENSIONS
AND ALTERATIONS TO ENLARGE WORSHIP AREA,
CREATE NEW HALLS & ROOMS, NEW ENTRANCE
AND TOILETS AT LEOMINSTER BAPTIST CHURCH,
ETNAM STREET, LEOMINSTER, HR6 8AJ**

DCNC2004/2392/L – AS ABOVE

**For: Trustees for Leominster Baptist Church per
Mr P J Dennis Dip Arch RIBA DayOne Ryelands Road
Leominster Herefordshire HR6 8NZ**

Date Received:

30th June 2004

Expiry Date:

25th August 2004

Local Member: Councillors R Burke and J P Thomas

Ward:

Leominster South

Grid Ref:

49890, 58886

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 Leominster Baptist Chapel, a Grade II Listed Building, is located on the south side of Etnam Street, opposite the entrance to Etnam Street car park, and between Norfolk House and Waverley House, and in the Leominster Conservation Area.
- 1.2 The chapel dates from 1771 and is constructed in red brick under a hipped clay tiled roof. Later additions include a 19th century extension with conical roof and 20th century extension at the rear.
- 1.3 To the rear of the chapel is a small graveyard and Caswell Terrace is beyond. There are 2 Poplar trees and a Yew tree in the graveyard.
- 1.4 These applications propose to enlarge the worship area by extending into the 19th century addition and removing the 20th century extension. Additional rooms are also proposed to be located between the chapel and Norfolk House. Internal alterations will include the removal of a pine pulpit, and pews. Access to the chapel will be from a new entrance lobby, which will include disabled ramp.

2. Policies

2.1 Leominster District Local Plan (Herefordshire)

- A1 – Managing the District's Assets and Resources
- A2 – Settlement Hierarchy
- A18 – Listed Buildings and their Settings
- A21 – Development within Conservation Areas
- A24 – Scale and Character of Development
- A54 – Protection of Residential Amenity

2.2 Hereford and Worcester County Structure Plan

CTC 7 – Development and features of historic and architectural importance
CTC 9 – Development criteria

2.3 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (Revised Deposit Draft)

HBA1 – Alterations and extensions to Listed Buildings
HBA4 – Setting of Listed Buildings
HBA6 – New development within Conservation Areas

2.4 PPG 1 – General policy and principles
PPG 15 – Planning and the historic environment

3. Planning History

NC2000/1540/L - Installation of partition wall. Approved 2.8.2000.

4. Consultation Summary

Statutory Consultations

4.1 None required.

Internal Council Advice

4.2 Head of Engineering and Transport: No objection.

4.3 Chief Conservation Officer: No objection.

4.3 Chief Conservation Officer - Landscape: No objection.

5. Representations

5.1 Leominster Town Council: 'Recommend approval, but express concern over the lack of disabled access at the main entrance, and over the proposed movement of the pulpit, which, it is felt, should be the subject of evaluation by the Historic Buildings Officer.'

5.2 Eleven letters of objection have been received. The main points raised are:

- a) Loss of Poplar trees will be detrimental to the character of the area.
- b) Internal alterations will be to the detriment and harm of this Listed Building.
- c) Noise nuisance during building works.
- d) Effect on the amenities of the residents of Norfolk House.

5.3 The Georgian Group and Ancient Monuments Society both object to the application in that the proposal would result in the loss of significant historic fabric.

5.4 The full text of these letters can be inspected at Northern Planning Services, Blueschool House, Blueschool Street, Hereford, and prior to the Sub-Committee meeting.

6. Officers Appraisal

- 6.1 Leominster's Baptist Church, a small red-brick building of pleasing proportion, presides over Marlow's Court. Together with the other late C18 historic buildings in the Court, which were built to compliment each other, the simple but nevertheless arresting façade the Church contributes highly to the varied character of Etnam Street and to the Conservation Area. Later changes include a C19 addition with conical roof and an indifferent C20 extension at the rear
- 6.2 Internally, the church retains a balcony on cast iron columns but other fittings such as the less remarkable pulpit and the pinewood pews are of late C19 date; possibly contemporary with the conical roofed extension. The interest in the Baptist Church is threefold. Firstly it is important for the visual and architectural contribution that it offers to the Marlow's Court and to the street scene; secondly for its historical connection with the town, having been commissioned by Mary Marlow in 1771 and thirdly: for its plan form, features and fittings.
- 6.3 Informal negotiations at officer level have been on-going for several years and the current application takes on board many of the recommendations that have been raised. It is accepted that the current church no longer provides adequate accommodation for its growing congregation and that to keep it in its current location, it must change. PPG 15 advises that when considering applications for consent, changes in the worship needs of a congregation ..' *should be given due weight as material considerations..*' (8.12)
- 6.4 It is considered important for the future of the building that it retains its current use and a balance was sought between the need to keep the building functioning as a church with the need to retain its special interest and character. This is in accordance with Government guidance which advises that, '*The best use will very often be the use for which the building was originally designed*', and '*...new, and even continuing, uses will often necessitate some degree of adaptation*'. (PPG15, 3.10 and 3.8).
- 6.5 There is no concern in principle to the new extensions to the side and rear of the building. The design, massing and material content is such that the historic building remains visually dominant and distinctive. The new entrance to the side of the church successfully keeps the front façade unencumbered while at the same time, solves problems regarding disabled access.
- 6.6 The internal alterations are more invasive. However the most sensitive parts of the building have been recognised and it is felt that none of the changes contained within this application sufficiently affect the special character of the building to justify refusal. The areas of most potential concern are:
- 1) The opening of the rear wall of the church. Although the removal of major walls in a listed building is commonly resisted, it can be acceptable in some circumstances to mitigate the harm by ensuring that its former location and function made abundantly clear. The proposal shows thickened piers at either side of the new opening and revised drawing (A) introduces timber panelling to soffit and reveals. This will go some way to visually retain the plan-form. However, it is felt that the piers should be larger and that the height of the lintel should be limited so that the opening is clearly a later alteration. It is noted that the panelling in the Church is to be retained but not extended into the C19 part so that features of the two rooms remain distinct.

- 2) The removal of the pulpit. This is essentially a later addition but nevertheless an important fitting which illuminates the historical methods of worship. It is understood that the pulpit is obsolete in the functioning of the modern church and the proposal indicates that it will be relocated within the enlarged church. This accords with Government advice on the retention of fittings, '*...where there is no alternative to the removal....(of a fitting) it should be savedand not removed from the building..*' (PPG15 C.61)
 - 3) The removal of pews. These are also later additions and although interesting are not of outstanding quality. It is understood they are no longer needed by the congregation but although their removal is regrettable, the revised drawings confirm that the pews on the balcony will be retained. This, in accordance with Government guidance which advises that, '*When extensive re-ordering takes place, some examples of the replaced furnishings should be retained*'...(PPG15 p 8-11), is considered to be acceptable.
 - 4) The blocking of the front door. Revised drawing (A) shows that the inside of the doorway will be filled with a glass panel. This is felt to be an acceptably reversible solution which also allows the door and light from the fanlight above to be visible within the Church.
- 6.7 In order to accommodate the proposal the Poplar trees and Yew tree that are located within the graveyard at the rear of the chapel will need to be removed. While objection has been received to the loss of these trees, in particular the Poplar trees, the Landscape Officer acknowledges that they are visible from Etnam Street, and from Caswell Terrace, which is to the rear of the site, but does not consider that the Poplars are suitable species to be retained within close proximity to buildings. Poplar trees can be structurally unsound and are prone to sudden failure – the shedding of branches etc. They also have a high water intake and are associated with subsidence damage, particularly on clay soils. Furthermore, it is not possible to reduce them in height or to prune them without spoiling the form of the trees. There is also no objection to the removal of the Yew tree as it is not visible from outside the site.
- 6.8 This proposal seeks to find a balance between satisfying the needs of the modern Church by updating and enlarging its premises without adversely affecting the special qualities of the listed building. It is not considered that the alterations proposed in these applications will have a detrimental impact on the character of the Baptist Church and are not irredeemably invasive.

RECOMMENDATION

NC2004/2391/F

That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

1 - A01 (Time limit for commencement (full permission))

Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2 - B01 (Samples of external materials)

Reason: To ensure that the materials harmonise with the surroundings.

3 - F16 (Restriction of hours during construction) (8.00am – 5.00pm)

Reason: To protect the amenity of local residents.

4 - C04 (Details of window sections, eaves, verges and barge boards)

Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of this building of [special] architectural or historical interest.

5 - G04 (Landscaping scheme (general))

Reason: In order to protect the visual amenities of the area.

6 - G05 (Implementation of landscaping scheme (general))

Reason: In order to protect the visual amenities of the area.

Informative:

1 - N15 - Reason(s) for the Grant of PP/LBC/CAC

NC2004/2392/L

That Listed Building consent be granted subject to the following conditions:

1 - C01 (Time limit for commencement (Listed Building Consent)

Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 18(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

2 - B01 (Samples of external materials)

Reason: To ensure that the materials harmonise with the surroundings.

3 - C04 (Details of window sections, eaves, verges and barge boards)

Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of this building of [special] architectural or historical interest.

Informative:

1 - N15 - Reason(s) for the Grant of PP/LBC/CAC

Decision:

Notes:

.....

Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.