

SECTION B – MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

APPEALS DETERMINED

a) Planning Appeals

Appeal Ref: A2015/0007 **Planning Ref:** P2015/0212

PINS Ref: APP/Y6930/A/15/3129244

Applicant: Mr R Beale

Proposal: Conversion of chapel to residential dwelling, plus creation of off street car parking, installation of velux windows, 2 new windows and door, demolition of chimney and outbuildings plus outline planning permission for a detached two storey dwelling with details of access (all other matters reserved)

Site Address: Rhiwfarw Chapel, Rhiwfawr, Swansea

Appeal Method: Written Representations

Decision Date: 14th October 2015

Decision: Appeal Dismissed

The application is a hybrid application, being for outline permission for a detached dwelling and for full permission for a variation of a previous permission for conversion of the former chapel for residential use.

The main issues in this appeal concerned the effects of the proposed additional dwelling on the character and visual amenity of the area and whether or not the proposed arrangements for on-site parking and vehicular access for both dwellings would provide an acceptable level of safety.

The Inspector noted that the gap between the chapel building and the neighbouring house is quite narrow and, when allowance is made for spaces between the proposed new house and its plot boundaries (including the car parking arrangements indicated), the

width available is extremely limited, and the proposed new house would appear very cramped in such a small space.

Having regard to the submitted parameters, the Inspector also considered the house would appear as a tall, thin detached building from the front, constrained within a relatively narrow plot and quite alien to its surroundings.

The appellants arguments that Welsh Government policy supports higher density development in areas well served by public transport and encourages planning authorities to consider innovative designs that make good use of available spaces were not considered to justify development that would unacceptably harm the character of an area. In this case, he concluded that the proposed new house would appear so cramped and out of keeping with its surroundings that it would cause unacceptable harm to the street scene and the character and appearance of the area, contrary to the aims of Unitary Development Plan policies GC1, ENV17 and H3.

Turning to the second main issue, the Council's refusal referred to the provision of substandard parking spaces, the lack of an acceptable turning area within the site, the location of the access close to a sharp bend, and to vehicular conflict to the detriment of highway and pedestrian safety.

With regard to parking arrangements and the practicality of the on-site turning area, the inspector agreed that those indicated would be impractical, but could possibly be overcome by changing the indicative layout. These deficiencies were considered to reflect the restricted nature of the site and to reinforce his main conclusions rather than as reasons for refusal in their own right.

The access arrangements on to the public highway, however, were of more fundamental concern, and the Inspector considered that the increased number of vehicles generated by an additional house would lead to increased risks of vehicular and pedestrian conflict, which would be further exacerbated if the on-site turning arrangements were substandard. These increased risks would be detrimental to highway and pedestrian safety and contrary to Unitary Development Plan policies GC1, H3 and T1.