



The Planning Officer  
Waverley Borough Council  
Western Planning Committee  
BY EMAIL

10 February 2022

Dear Sir

Gemini Chapel (WA/2022/00210) - Objection

This is an amended application following the rejection of WA/2021/01399 last year. The Society welcomes the improvements in the design proposed in this new application. However, we consider that it still falls short on a number of points, which are set out below.

**Heritage issues**

As we noted in our response to the previous objection, the Haslemere Society are currently researching and producing a draft list of buildings to be identified as Buildings of Local Merit, though this has been somewhat delayed by the pandemic. The Gemini Chapel will almost certainly be one of our recommendations as it is an historic (former) place of worship. We therefore recommend that Waverley should identify the building as a non-designated heritage asset at the planning stage. We also suggested that the applicant should provide a Heritage Statement for this application; this has not been done and we again recommend that it should be requested. If the building is identified as a NDHA, NPPF paragraph 203 will be relevant.

As in the previous application, the conversion design proposed would cause significant, unnecessary damage to the historic fabric of the building. We would like to highlight two particular items:

- The proposed loss of a first-floor window on the northern elevation and the associated historic brickwork below it, as this is proposed to be altered to form a doorway in this application. The applicant has seemingly proposed this solution to provide an amenity space balcony in this location. Other solutions to amenity provide should be explored. For instance, why does Unit 1 have 2 areas of amenity space to the front (one internal)? One of these external amenity spaces could be allocated to Unit 2, and a staircase provided internally for Unit 2 to access it exclusively. The cycle storage could be relocated to the long thin landscaped area of the site, east of the church.
- Secondly the creation of a doorway on the southern side by altering the original southern window, and the loss of historic brickwork below it would also lead to the

loss of historic fabric. There are two other doorways in the scheme and one of these should be used to provide a core for two flats to use. Another alternative is creating a new doorway accessed from the steps adjacent to the western elevation, just off the King's Road northern pavement. This elevation is far plainer and less sensitive to change.

In both cases a more sympathetic conversion scheme should be possible, which would leave these intact. A Heritage Statement would clarify the key historic elements and the conversion should be designed in the light of that statement.

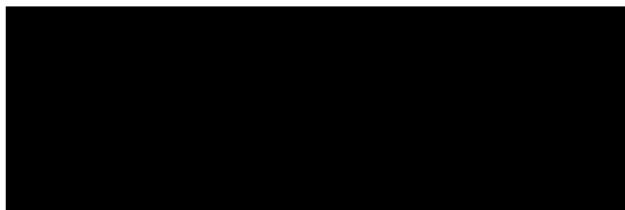
Should the application be granted, we suggest that the rooflights should be specified as conservation rooflights.

### **Pollution impact on residents**

The development site is sandwiched between the busy B2131 (Lower Street) and Kings Road. Because the site is on a hill, all the windows on the ground floor must, perforce, face out onto the B2131. This means, in the current design, that the proposed four residents of Unit 1 would have no ventilation or amenity space that did not open onto this road. The Design & Application Statement deals with the noise impact of this but makes no comment at all about the pollution implications. These are likely to be exacerbated by the fact that the road here is in a slight hollow as it dips to run below the railway line just to the west of the site. The road is busy much of the time, particularly during the morning and evening rush hours, and is also a bus route. Pollution is therefore a real concern, but the applicant has made no attempt even to assess the extent of the risk. This would be a particular issue if, as seems likely, the four residents included children.

As in our letter of last year, we note that, in principle, the Society welcomes the development of this site for the provision of residential accommodation and sincerely hopes that the developer will be able to make appropriate amendments in the proposal to deal with the issues we raise.

Yours Sincerely



Sonja Dullaway  
(on behalf of The Haslemere Society Planning Group)