

Application No: 25/0676/FUL  
Application Type: Full Planning  
Location: St Georges Street Baptist Church St Georges Street, Macclesfield,  
Cheshire East, SK11 6TG  
Proposal: Converting St Georges Street Baptist Church into 8 luxury  
apartments and a 6-bedroom House in Multiple Occupation (HMO).  
Applicant: Wynne, Elivi Property Group  
Expiry Date: 3 October 2025

## Summary

The principle of converting this vacant church into residential use, comprising of 8 apartments and an HMO in this location, in Macclesfield, a Principal Town, is deemed acceptable. Indeed, the provision of additional housing in a sustainable location is welcomed in the absence of a 5-year housing land supply. This is afforded significant weight.

The change of use would re-use a vacant building deemed to represent a Non-Designated Heritage Asset (NDHA). The future of heritage assets should be given great weight in planning decisions, and securing a viable reuse is often the most effective way to ensure their long-term survival. Given that the building has been vacant for over 3 years, the heritage benefits of its re-use is afforded significant weight.

Whilst the level of off-street parking spaces proposed falls significantly below Council standards, following the undertaking of a parking study that showed provision of a more than adequate amount of on-street parking in an area where this is characteristic in conjunction with the sustainable location of the site and the small-scale nature of some of the residential units proposed, the under provision is considered to be acceptable in this instance.

Subject to conditions, the application proposals would not result in any neighbouring amenity concerns or result in environmental amenity concerns. However, the outlook from numerous principal habitable rooms for the future occupiers of apartments 5-8 would be limited either as a result of required additional obscuration of existing windows or because the only outlook comes in the form of roof lights positioned above head height.

In response to this concern, it is not uncommon for the conversion of buildings that utilise loft spaces to be afforded limited outlook as a consequence of fully utilising the building being converted. There often needs to be a balance between ensuring a suitable degree of amenity of both existing and future amenity and securing a design that respects the character and appearance of the building being converted. In this instance, the proposed conversion would ensure that the character and appearance of the building of heritage value would be retained and the carefully proposed obscuration and positioning of rooflights would protect neighbouring amenity. The consequence of this is that the degree of outlook to some of the proposed apartments would be limited.

It is noted that for each of the apartments impacted, the main open-plan living spaces to these homes, the area within which the majority of the future occupier's time is likely to be spent, would be afforded outlook. It is the outlook from some of the bedrooms in apartments

5-8, that would be limited. This harm is afforded moderate weight in the context of the development as a whole.

The development would not harm the character and appearance of the Macclesfield (High Street) Conservation Area and would result in no archaeological, trees, landscape, ecology, flood risk or flight safety concerns, subject to conditions where necessary.

Overall, it is considered that the significant benefits of providing new residential accommodation in a Principal Town in the absence of a 5-year housing land supply, within walking distance to public services and facilities along with the benefits of re-using and therefore retaining a NDHA outweigh the moderate harm relating to a lack of outlook for the future occupiers of apartments 5-8. As such on balance, the application proposals are recommended for approval.

### **Summary recommendation**

**APPROVE subject to conditions**

## **1. REASON FOR REFERRAL**

- 1.1. The application has been 'called-in' to Northern Planning Committee by Cllr Farrall for the following reasons:

*'Impact on High Street conservation area - potential harm to character and appearance - (HER3, SE7)*

*Impact on a non-designated heritage asset - loss of historic features - (HER1, NPPF Para 207)*

*Design, Scale and Character - concerns over external alterations and extension - (SE1)*

*Residential amenity and highways - potential impact on parking, traffic and residential amenity - (SD2)'*

## **2. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT**

- 2.1 The application relates to St Georges Street Baptist Church which is located on the corner of St Georges Street and Grapes Street, Macclesfield within the Macclesfield Settlement Boundary.
- 2.2 The application site also falls within the Macclesfield (High Street) Conservation Area, a Site of Archaeological Potential and the Sunderland Street & Silk Quarter Character Area.

## **3. DESCRIPTION OF PROPSAL**

- 3.1. Full planning permission is sought to covert a church to residential use. More specifically, the proposed use would comprise of:
- A 6-bedroom HMO
  - 8 Apartments
    - X4 1-bedroom apartments
    - X2 2-bedroom apartments
    - X2 3-bedroom apartments

- 3.2 Revised plans and further information was received during the application process in order to try and address officer concerns, and a re-consultation exercise was undertaken.
- 3.3 The changes included:
- Change of a 2-bed apartment to a 1-bed apartment (*Apartment 1 in Lower Ground Floor*)
  - Changes the internal layout of the units in an attempt to adhere with the Nationally Described Space Standards
  - Provision of additional obscure glazing
  - Retention of 6 cast iron columns at ground floor, details of a less intrusive approach to windows (i.e. where possible will now be retained and made good as opposed to being replaced) & provision conservation-style roof lights.
- 3.4 Additional information received included:
- Receipt of further drainage information
  - Identification of floor levels on the elevation plans to assist with amenity assessment.
  - Provision of a proposed section drawing to assist with amenity assessment
  - Written response to specific loss of privacy concerns identified by officer.
  - Fire safety information.
  - Rebuttal of concerns raised by the Council's Highways Officer with regards to the level of off-street parking proposed
  - Explanation as to why further heritage elements cannot be achieved.
- 3.5 Further revised plans were received post the closure of the re-consultation period. This comprised of an updated proposed ground floor plan, re-sizing the proportions of Apartment 2 in order to adhere with Nationally Described Space Standards. A section plan of Apartment 5 was also received.

#### **4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

**10/0097M** – Proposed demolition of existing external toilet block and construction of two-storey entrance lobby. Toilet facilities extension with access ramps and disabled parking – Approved 25<sup>th</sup> March 2010

**39686PB** – Alterations to existing toilet block and provision of covered access – Approved 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1985

#### **5. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY**

- 5.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was first published by the Government in March 2012 and has since been through several revisions. It sets out the planning policies for England and how these should be applied in the determination of planning applications and the preparation of development plans. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The NPPF is a material consideration which should be taken into account for the purposes of decision making.

## 6. DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY

- 6.1. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires decisions on planning applications to be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (2010 – 2030) was adopted in July 2017. The Site Allocations and Development Policies Documents was adopted in December 2022. The policies of the Development Plan relevant to this application are set out below, including relevant Neighbourhood Plan policies where applicable to the application site.
- 6.2. Relevant policies of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (CELPS) and Cheshire East Site Allocations and Development Plan Policies Document (SADPD)

### *CELPS*

MP1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development  
PG1 - Overall Development Strategy  
PG2 - Settlement Hierarchy  
PG7 – Spatial Distribution of Development  
SD1 - Sustainable Development in Cheshire East  
SD2 - Sustainable Development Principles  
IN2 – Developer Contributions  
EG1 – Economic Prosperity  
SC1 – Leisure and Recreation  
SC3 – Health and Wellbeing  
SC4 – Residential Mix  
SC5 – Affordable Homes  
SE1 – Design  
SE2 - Efficient Use of Land  
SE3 - Biodiversity and Geodiversity  
SE4 - The Landscape  
SE5 - Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland  
SE6 – Green Infrastructure  
SE7 – This Historic Environment  
SE9 - Energy Efficient Development  
SE12 - Pollution, Land Contamination and Land Instability  
SE13 – Flood Risk Management  
CO1 – Sustainable Travel and Transport  
CO4 – Travel Plans and Transport Assessments

Appendix C - Parking Standards

### *SADPD*

PG9 - Settlement Boundaries  
GEN1 - Design principles  
GEN5 - Aerodrome safeguarding  
ENV1 - Ecological network  
ENV2 - Ecological implementation  
ENV3 - Landscape character  
ENV5 – Landscaping  
ENV6 - Trees, hedgerows and woodland implementation  
ENV7 - Climate Change

ENV12 - Air quality  
ENV14 - Light pollution  
ENV15 - New development and existing uses  
ENV16 - Surface water management and flood risk  
ENV17 - Protecting water resources.  
HER1 - Heritage assets  
HER3 – Conservation Areas  
HER4 – Listed Buildings  
HER7 – Non-designated Heritage Asset  
HER8 – Archaeology  
HOU1 – Housing mix  
HOU4 – Houses in multiple occupation  
HOU8 – Space, accessibility and wheelchair housing standards  
HOU11 – Extensions and alterations  
HOU12 – Amenity  
HOU13 – Residential Standards  
HOU14 – Housing density  
HOU15 – housing delivery  
HOU16 – Small and medium-sized sites  
RET8 – Residential accommodation in the town centre  
INF1 - Cycleways, bridleways and footpaths  
INF3 - Highways safety and access  
INF9 – Utilities  
REC5 – Community facilities

## **7. Relevant supplementary planning documents or guidance**

- 7.1. Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance do not form part of the Development Plan but may be a material consideration in decision making. The following documents are considered relevant to this application:

- Cheshire East Design Guide SPD

## **8. CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)**

The following comments were received in response to the re-consultation period which ran for 2 weeks between the 11<sup>th</sup> July 2025 and the 25<sup>th</sup> July 2025, unless stated otherwise.

**Head of Strategic Transport:** No objection, following outcome of parking survey

**Environmental Protection:** No objections, subject to the following conditions: Provision of low emission boilers, submission/approval of imported soil contaminated land verification and that works should stop should contamination be identified. A number of informatives are also proposed.

**Housing Standards Officer:** No comments received in relation to the revised plans.

*Original comments: No objections, subject to the scheme being compliant with Planning and Building Control legislation, as well as the Council's adopted standards for Houses in Multiple Occupation.*

**Flood Risk Manager:** Object due to the submission of insufficient drainage information. More specifically, seek the proposed drainage plan to be updated to show the proposed pipe diameters, slope angles, cover levels and invert levels.

**Environment Agency:** No comments received in relation to the revised plans.

*Original comments: No comments received at time of report.*

**Manchester Airport Safeguarding Authority:** No comments received in relation to the revised plans.

*Original comments: No objections*

**Cheshire Archaeology Planning Advisory Service:** No objections. Recommend advise sought from the Council's Heritage Officer.

**Cheshire Fire and Rescue** – Advise that access should be in accordance with standards.

**Macclesfield Town Council:** No comments received in relation to the revised plans.

*Original comments: Object to the proposed development for the following, summarised reasons:*

- *Provision of the 6-bedroomed HMO results in an overdevelopment of the site and the quality of accommodation is below that expected.*
- *No Conservation Officer approval and no comment from Civic Society*

## 9. REPRESENTATIONS

In response to the public re-consultation exercise, comments were received from persons from 2 addresses, raising the following concerns.

### Highways

- Revisions have not address parking concerns.
- Unacceptable impact upon the road network due to a lack of parking
- Roads are heavily congested and existing demand already results in cars parked on both sides of the road and up to the junctions. Results in poor visibility, narrows the carriageway, creates a dangerous environment for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians.
- Nearby Theatre currently adds to existing parking pressures attracting up to 200 people.
- Is a car park nearby, but since charges were introduced, less likely to be used
- Does not meet parking requirements in Appendix C of CELPS.
- Contrary to advise within Cheshire East Design Guide SPD
- Contrary to policies SD1, SE1, CO4 of CELPS, GEN1, HOU12, HOU14, RET8 and INF3 of SADPD

### Amenity

- Overdevelopment of site. Lower ground floor has a lack of external and internal amenity space, access to the provision of waste disposal facilities (internal and

external), lack of natural light, communal space gives direct views into bedrooms, impact of BBQ space on closest rooms.

- Apartments lack outdoor private amenity space.
- Not clear what parts of the internal floor areas as 'useable' (i.e. in the loft)
- Only natural light would be obtained from rooflights within loft space.
- Internal noise concerns
- Apartment 1 is small for a 2-bed apartment. Concerned that this could be converted to more HMO bedrooms in the future. Seek PD removal to prevent this.
- Fire safety concerns. Internal layout raises problems.

### HMO

- Overprovision of HMO's in area

### Heritage

- Building has not been on the market very long. Other uses should be explored.

In response to the original public consultation exercise, comments were received from persons from 9 addresses. Of the 9 received, 8 have objected to the scheme, for the following summarised reasons:

### Highways

- Lack of parking – Area already struggles with people parking on the streets who work in the town centre, use the train station or visit the theatre (MADS) on Lord Street to avoid parking charges. Scheme will exacerbate the issue. Do not agree with the planning statement that there is an abundance of parking available within the immediate vicinity. Concerned about future emergency vehicle access. Impact of less on-street parking on local business (i.e. local childcare business)
- Traffic – will exacerbate already high traffic concerns.
- Refuse collection – Bin lorries do not currently travel down Grape Street, so all bins (black and grey) are congregated on the corner of Grape St and Lord St, blocking the pavement on this narrow road.

### Amenity

- Loss of privacy / overlooking – When occupied as a church, not regularly overlooked. However, new use will result in constant overlooking of windows and private amenity space.
- Loss of amenity from building work
- Light pollution

### HMO's

- Already a number of HMO's in the area

### Other matters

- Anti-social behaviour (fly-tipping, drug-related crimes, dog fouling, alcohol drinking)

Of the 9 consultation responses received, 1 was received in support of the scheme, making the following, summarised points:

- Re-purposing of a heritage asset
- Residential use is consistent with local character.
- Although parking provision is not to standard, it is more than the majority of other dwellings in the area where there is a heavy reliance on on-street parking.

## **10. OFFICER APPRAISAL**

### **Principle of development**

#### Residential use

- 10.1 The application site falls within a predominantly residential area of Macclesfield, within the Settlement Boundary. Policy PG2 of the CELPS identifies Macclesfield as a Principal Town. The policy details that in such locations, significant development will be encouraged to support their revitalisation, recognising their roles as the most important settlements in the borough. Development will maximise the use of existing infrastructure and resources to allow jobs, homes and other facilities to be located close to each other and accessible by public transport.
- 10.2 Policy PG9 of the SADPD relates to settlement boundaries. It states that within such boundaries, development proposals will be supported where they are in keeping with the scale, role and function of that settlement and do not conflict with any other relevant policy of the local plan.
- 10.3 With regards to overall housing need, Cheshire East Council can only currently demonstrate a 3.8-year supply of housing, short of the required 5-year housing land supply requirement as set out within the NPPF.
- 10.4 Policy RET8 of the SADPD relates to residential accommodation in town centres. This policy supports such development so long as the proposals provide appropriate and safe access arrangements, secure and well-designed cycle parking and appropriate and well-located waste and recycling facilities. This detail will be considered later in this report.
- 10.5 The provision of additional residential units in this residential part of Macclesfield, a Principal Town, where development is encouraged, is considered to be acceptable in principle, particularly given the current need for housing in Cheshire East.
- 10.6 A specific assessment of the acceptability of the HMO aspect of the scheme is considered later in this report.

#### Loss of church

- 10.7 The application proposal would result in the loss of St Georges Street Baptist Church. It is advised on page 9 of the submitted Design and Access Statement that the site has been vacant for over 3 years. It is explained that the poorly constructed 2010 extension caused significant issues such as severe damp & mould throughout the building which has resulted in extensive damage to the existing finishes with large areas of walls and ceilings cracking and, in many cases, deteriorating beyond repair. It is also advised

that much of the timber cladding has warped and become disfigured. It is stated that whilst the proposal would result in the demolition of the problematic extension, the damage it has caused to the original building, compounded by years of neglect and lack of maintenance, is considerable.

- 10.8 Policy REC5 of the SADPD relates to community facilities. The subtext of this policy specifies that facilities such as 'places of worship' (amongst others), are important to the communities that they serve. Policy REC5, criterion 2, states that any community facility that makes a positive contribution to the social or cultural life of a community should be retained unless suitable alternative provision is made.
- 10.9 The church has been closed for over 3 years. The agent for the application supplied additional information during the application process from an estate agent which advised that *'The church closed after a formal process was completed which looks at pastoral and financial aspects. The church membership had been shrinking, and this was accelerated by Covid, such that numbers were fewer and the average age was growing. The running costs of the building became unmanageable and hence the decision to sell. The church had tried to find somebody to take over the building but no success. I had a number of local charities show interest but ultimately the size of the building for refurb and re-purpose and hence the costs, were prohibitive.'*
- 10.10 For these reason and because importantly, none of the responses to the public consultation exercise raised the loss of the building as a church to be of particular concern, it is no longer deemed that the church makes a positive contribution to the social or cultural life of the community and as such, provision of a suitable alternative church is not deemed necessary in this instance and its loss as a church is accepted.

## **Design & Heritage**

- 10.11 Policy SE1 of the CELPS advises that the proposal should achieve a high standard of design and: wherever possible, enhance the built environment. It should also respect the pattern, character and form of the surroundings. Policy SD2 of the CELPS states that development should contribute positively to an area's character and identity, creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness in terms of; height, scale, form and grouping, choice of materials, external design features, massing of development, green infrastructure and relationship to neighbouring properties and streetscene. These policies are supported by the Cheshire East Design Guide SPD. Policy GEN1 of the SADPD sets out general design principles including a requirement that development should create high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places.
- 10.12 The site lies within the Macclesfield (High Street) Conservation Area. Consideration is also given to whether the application building should be considered as a Non-Designated Heritage Asset (NDHA). As such, heritage related policies are also relevant.
- 10.13 Policy SE7 of the CELPS refers to the Historic Environment. The crux of Policy SE7 is to ensure all new development avoids harm to heritage assets and makes a positive contribution to the character of Cheshire East's historic and built environment, including the setting of the assets and where appropriate, the wider historic environment. SADPD policy HER1 sets out submission requirements in relation to heritage assets. Policy HER3 of the SADPD sets out policy consideration for development affecting Conservation Areas and policy HER7 considers NDHA's.

- 10.14 As part of the proposed conversion, the following development is proposed on the exterior of the building or within its curtilage:
- Removal of a glass extension (2010) on the southern, side elevation.
  - Refurbishment of the exterior comprising of;
    - Southern, side elevation
      - re-instatement of several original windows
      - Flat-roofed, single-storey extension to provide access.
    - Repointing throughout where required with the correct lime mortar.
    - Stone repair in instances where cracked sandstone or stone decay occur.
    - Paint removal – where present, to be sensitively removed
  - Creation of a bin store on the southern, side frontage
  - Creation of a low-level wall (with railing above) running along the top of the courtyard to define the space, also on the southern, side elevation.
  - Addition of further obscured glazing/film
- 10.15 The church is not included on the Local list. It is a substantial building with some fine details and in the view of the Council's Heritage Officer, it is a NDHA of relatively high importance. It also makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the High Street Macclesfield Conservation Area and is prominent to both the front elevation to St. Georges Street and to the flanking side street, Grapes Street.
- 10.16 As proposed, the changes to the exterior of the building would be relatively minor, primarily comprising of the removal of a more modern extension, which adds little to the appearance of the building, and its replacement with a more modern, more compact extension. The remainder of the external works would primarily be refurbishment. Internally, more extensive works are proposed. However, following the applicant's agreement to retain more of the original features, this is not a concern.
- 10.17 Overall, the development would not harm the character or appearance of the Macclesfield (High Street) Conservation Area and would sensitively re-use a NDHA which has been vacant for a number of years, which is welcomed.
- 10.18 As such, the application proposals are deemed to be of an acceptable design and would not negatively impact heritage assets. As such, the application is deemed to adhere with the relevant design & heritage policies of the development plan.

### **Archaeology**

- 10.19 The application sits within the area of archaeological potential as defined in the Cheshire Historic Towns Survey (1997-2002) report for Macclesfield, which forms part of the Key Evidence supporting Policy SE7, Historic Environment in the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy, 2010- 2030 (adopted July 2017). Policy HER8 of the SADPD considers matters of archaeology.
- 10.20 The Council's Archaeology Officer, in response to the consultation on the original scheme, reviewed the supporting documentation along with the information held on the Cheshire Historic Environment Records and advised that this application was unlikely to disturb significant below ground archaeological deposits and therefore there recommended no further archaeological recommendations. Whilst no comments have

been received in relation to the revisions, there appears no reasons as to why the same conclusions would not be drawn.

## Highways

- 10.21 Policy SD1 of the CELPS details that development should wherever possible, provide safe access and sufficient car parking in accordance with adopted highway standards. Policy CO1 of the CELPS expects developments to reduce the need to travel by guiding development to sustainable locations, ensuring that development gives priority to walking, cycling and public transport within its design. Development should also improve pedestrian and cycling facilities and public transport integration. Policy INF3 of the SADPD relates to highway safety and access. It details that development proposals should comply with the relevant Highways Authority's and other highway design guidance. It should provide safe access to and from the site for all highways users and make sure that development traffic can be satisfactorily assimilated into the existing highway network. Appendix C of the CELPS refers to the Cheshire East Parking standards.
- 10.22 The main consideration relates to parking provision. The application proposes the provision of x4 off-street parking spaces for the development as a whole. These are shown to be provided on the Grapes Street frontage on the southern elevation of the site.
- 10.23 Appendix C of the CELPS sets out the Council's parking standards. Based on the development proposed, the scheme would require 18 parking spaces. This takes into account the sites location within a Principal Town. The application proposals would be 14 spaces short.
- 10.24 Paragraph C.2 of Appendix C of the CELPS states '*Cheshire East Council will accept representations to vary from car parking standards on a site-by-site basis with reference to evidence obtained locally or from a suitable data source (e.g. TRICS) outlining predicted parking profiles that would allow departures from the Standards...*'
- 10.25 During the application process, CEC Highways undertook a parking survey, over 2 days, to understand the availability of on-street parking in the area in order to have a better understanding of whether the Council could consider a departure from the parking standards in this instance. On-street parking is the principal parking solution for the majority of the surrounding properties in this terraced part of Macclesfield.
- 10.26 The survey was undertaken on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> August between 6pm and 8pm and covered the following streets: Park Street, High Street, St Georges Place, St Georges Street, Grapes Street and Lord Street. Each street was visited 3 times per day. Spaces were those measured to be approximately 5-metres in length.
- 10.27 The survey results show that there were on average, 30 parking spaces available on the surrounding terraced streets on each of the 2 survey days. Well above the number required by this development. On St George's Street, Park Street and Lord Street, those closest to the application site, there were, on average 21 free parking spaces on each of the 2 survey days. Again, this is more than required by this development (14).
- 10.28 There are a number of caveats to this survey. These include that it is recognised that this survey was undertaken during the summer holidays, so it's likely to be quieter than at other times in the year. Also, it is recognised that based on local accounts, when

productions are taking place at the nearby Mads Theatre, parking becomes extremely limited. No such productions were taking place during the survey.

- 10.29 Given that the number of vacant parking spaces identified nearby was on average more than double than that required by this development, there were enough spaces to account for it being possibly 'quieter than usual' as mentioned by a resident during the survey. Furthermore, this is all based on an assumption that the development would generate 18 new car parking space requirements. Given the proximity of the application site to the town centre, easily within walking distance to all its facilities and public transport hubs, in conjunction with the small scale of some of the residential units proposed, it's quite possible that the development will not generate this much parking demand.
- 10.30 Overall, based on the evidence before the Council, the level of off-street parking provided is deemed acceptable in this instance. This is due to the surveyed availability of on-street parking nearby, which is how the majority of residents park in this terraced part of town, the close proximity of the site to the town centre where a bus and train station exist and the small scale of some of the residential units proposed which might suggest that not all future residents would own/have access to a car.
- 10.31 For the above reasons, the application proposals are deemed acceptable in relation to highway safety. The Council's Highway's Officer has raised no objections following the outcome of the parking survey.

### **Amenity**

- 10.32 SADPD Policy HOU12 sets out that proposals must not cause unacceptable harm to the amenities of adjoining or nearby occupiers of residential properties, sensitive uses, or future occupiers of the proposed development due to loss of privacy, sunlight and daylight, the overbearing and dominating effect of new buildings, environmental disturbance or pollution or traffic generation, access and parking. Policy HOU13 sets out residential standards.
- 10.33 Policy SE1 of the CELPS states that development should ensure an appropriate level of privacy for new and existing residential properties. Policy HOU8 of the SADPD deals with residential standards. Policies ENV12 (Air quality) and ENV14 (Light pollution) of the SADPD and SE12 (Pollution) of the CELPS consider environmental amenity matters.

### Neighbouring amenity

- 10.34 Policy HOU12 of the SADPD states that development proposals must not cause unacceptable harm to the amenities of future occupiers (amongst others), due to; loss of privacy, sunlight and daylight, overbearing and dominating effect of new buildings, environmental disturbance or traffic generation, access and parking.
- 10.35 As the only additional built form proposed would be the creation of a single-storey, flat-roofed extension, bin store and wall, all in the place of and comprising of a smaller area and lower height than the 2010 extension being removed, it is not considered that the change of use would result in any neighbouring amenity issues in relation to overbearing impact/visual intrusion or a loss of light.

- 10.36 Matters of privacy are however more relevant given the use change. Even though predominantly existing openings would be utilised.
- 10.37 In consideration of the front elevation, the west elevation fronting St Georges Street, the only changes proposed would be the change to the main entrance door designs. The main elevation of the application building lies approximately 13.2 metres away from the dwellings on the opposite side of St Georges Street. The single-storey outrigger to the right-hand-side projects a little further forward and is approximately 11.2 metres from the properties opposite.
- 10.38 The gap between buildings is already short of the minimum separation standards within Policy HOU13. Windows on the ground and first-floor would face the properties opposite. The ground-floor windows within the main part of the building would all serve an entrance lobby as per the existing scenario. As such, these raise no concerns. At first floor there are five tall, narrow windows that would be reused. Three of these would be to a stairs/landing area for to access apartments 6, 7 and 8. Two of the windows would serve as the only windows to bedroom 1 within apartment 8. Within the closer, single-storey outrigger, the existing 4 windows would be re-used to provide 3 windows to an open-plan kitchen/living space to Apartment 5 and the final window would serve a void over stairs. Given that front-to-front relationships between the dwellings in the area is commonly 11 metres, it is not deemed that a refusal of the application due to a loss of privacy from these openings upon the occupiers of the St Georges Street properties opposite would be reasonable.
- 10.39 On the southern side elevation an existing single storey extension would be demolished and a smaller, flat-roofed extension would be built in its place resulting in original openings/new openings being revealed/created on the external façade. In addition, five roof lights are proposed within the roof slope of the main building. Off-street parking is also proposed on this frontage. Half of the frontage of the southern elevation faces the side elevation of No.22 St Georges Street on the opposite side of Grape Street, whereas the other half faces the rear garden of this neighbouring property. The application building is off set from No.1 Grapes Street. As such, changes to this elevation have the most potential to result in a loss of amenity for the existing and future occupiers of No.22 St Georges Street. The demolition of the existing extension and its replacement with a smaller replacement would considerably reduce the extent of built form on this side of the building to the benefit of No.22 St Georges Street. As such, the application proposals are not deemed to harm the amenities of the occupiers of this neighbouring property in terms of having an overbearing impact or a reduction in light it is afforded.
- 10.40 The principal consideration is whether the conversion would result in an unacceptable loss of privacy. Within the side elevation of No.22 are two ground floor and two first floor windows. The lower half of the ground floor window closest to the corner between St Georges Street and Grape Street is obscured as is the whole smaller window above. The remaining ground floor and first floor windows are also served by openings on their rear elevations. On the application building, at lower ground floor, two blocked-up windows would be re-instated. These would each serve as the sole window to one of the HMO bedrooms. Due to their below ground location and because they would be approximately 15.5 metres from the side elevation of No.22 St Georges Street, it is not considered that these, or any other of the lower ground floor openings on the main part of the southern elevation, would result in a loss of privacy. Within the existing single-storey outrigger on the application building that, at its closest point, is (and would remain) 5.4 metres away from the side elevation of No.22, it is proposed to reinstate

x2 windows almost at street level. Given the proximity of these to No.22, in the event of approval, it is considered that these should be conditioned to be obscured. The future occupiers would still benefit from outlook to this space from another opening.

- 10.41 At ground floor level on the application building, 2 original windows will be revealed on the main part of the building. However, these are set-back 15.5 metres from the side elevation of No.22 and most would be offset. As such, these are not deemed to result in a loss of privacy to No.22, nor would the closer lobby door in the proposed extension given the nature of the space it would serve. Similarly, the first-floor windows would also be 15.5 metres away from the side elevation of No.22, a sufficient distance in the context of the area.
- 10.42 The 5 roof lights within the roof-slope would all be above head height. The windows are all deemed far enough away from the rear private amenity space of No.22 so not to cause concern regarding overlooking. As such, it is not deemed that the proposed southern elevation of scheme would result in neighbouring amenity concerns.
- 10.43 With regards to the east elevation, no changes to the lower ground floor would impact neighbouring amenity as it is/would be screened behind a boundary wall. At ground floor, the existing windows in the closest neighbours to the east are already obscurely glazed, and this would remain. At first floor, the existing windows will once again be utilised. The lower portion of these two windows are already obscured. It is proposed to obscure the middle pane of these windows too in order to prevent overlooking. In the event of approval, this shall be secured by condition. The ground floor windows within the outrigger are deemed far enough away from the neighbours to the east to be of concern in relation to loss of privacy.
- 10.44 Finally, in consideration of the impact of the development upon neighbouring amenity to the north, at present, directly opposing this elevation and approximately 9.1 metres away, is the side wall of No.2 St Georges Street. Within this wall are four windows that directly face the northern side elevation of the application building and its private amenity space. To assist in preventing a loss of privacy to these neighbouring windows, two of which are at ground floor, the other two above at first floor, the applicant proposes the installation of a raised bed on this boundary and the planting of shrubbery that would assist in mitigating loss of privacy to (and from) the ground floor windows. In addition, it is proposed that further planting be undertaken closer to the application building to help screen any losses of privacy that maybe created from the lower ground floor accommodation. At ground floor, a section plan shows that because the lower portion of the windows on this elevation are already obscured, there should be no loss of privacy from the ground floor accommodation to any of these neighbouring windows. At first floor, once again the lower panels of the windows are obscurely glazed. However, it is also proposed that the next panels up be obscured in the event of approval. Subject to this being conditioned, it is considered that the application proposals should not result in an unacceptable loss of privacy for the occupiers of No.2 St Georges Street from the conversion of the building itself.
- 10.45 Whilst a loss of privacy is of concern from the proposed shared private amenity space, this same issue can occur based on the existing scenario as the space is outdoor space associated with the church. In addition, the proposed planting should assist in helping to mitigate the concerns. As such, subject to conditions relating to obscure glazing and the implementation of landscaping, it is not considered that the application proposals would result in an unacceptable impact upon the amenities of No.2 St Georges Street to the north.

- 10.46 Overall, the application proposals are not deemed to cause an unacceptable impact upon neighbouring amenity in terms of loss of privacy, light or an overbearing impact subject to obscure glazing and landscaping conditions.

Amenity of future occupiers

*Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS)*

- 10.47 Policy HOU8 of the SADPD relates to space, accessibility and wheelchair housing standards. Criterion 3 states that 'proposals for new residential development in the borough should meet the Nationally Described Space Standard. The policy continues to say that this standard will apply from six months after the date of the adoption of the plan. The plan was adopted in December 2022. As such, 6-months have passed and these standards apply.

- 10.48 A summary assessment of the scheme against the NDSS is set out in the table below:

Apartment number	No. of bedrooms	Number of bedspaces	Minimum gross internal floor area (m2)	Measured gross internal floor area (m2)	Overall Floorspace - Pass or Fail	Bedroom size	Overall pass or fail
1	1	2	50	57.44	Pass	ok	Pass
2	2	3	61	61	Pass	ok	Pass
3	1	1	37	37	Pass	ok	Pass
4	1	1	37	37	Pass	ok	Pass
5	1	2	58	63.42	Pass	ok	Pass
6	3	5	93	98.9	Pass	ok	Pass
7	2	3	70	73.37	Pass	ok	Pass
8	3	4	84	85.7	Pass	ok	Pass
HMO	6	6	116	152.45	Pass	ok	Pass

- 10.49 In terms of the criteria used to calculate the above, it should be noted that:

- All window cill areas have been excluded from the above measurements.
- The number of bedspaces has been determined by the size of the rooms (i.e. single or double)
- The floorspace of the eaves storage shown to Apartments 6, 7 and 8 on the second floor/Mezzanine level has been counted at 50% of its floor area as per NDSS guidance note.

- 10.50 The outcome of this assessment shows that, following the receipt of revised plans, all the residential accommodation adheres with the necessary NDSS. For these reasons, the application proposals are deemed to adhere to the requirements of Policy HOU8 (3).

*Privacy, light, outlook etc*

- 10.51 Policy HOU11 relates to extensions and alterations. Criterion 2 of this policy states that development should not cause unacceptable harm to the future occupiers of the dwelling in line with Policy HOU12. Policy HOU12 of the SADPD states that

development proposals must not cause unacceptable harm to the amenities of future occupiers (amongst others), due to; loss of privacy, sunlight and daylight, overbearing and dominating effect of new buildings, environmental disturbance or traffic generation, access and parking. Policy SE1 of the CELPS (4(i)) states that development proposals should ensure appropriate level of privacy for new (and existing) residential properties.

- 10.52 In consideration of these matters, the proposed shared private amenity space to the north of the building is currently directly overlooked by the side windows of No.2 St Georges Street. These openings also directly oppose the northern side elevation of the application building. As such, a loss of privacy for the future occupiers of both the private amenity space and the windows to some of the apartments & HMO on the northern side of the building from these is a consideration. There are 4 windows within the relevant side elevation of No.2 St George's Street. According to the planning history, these are likely to comprise of two first-floor windows, both of which are understood to be the only windows to a bedroom. Two ground floor windows exist directly below and are understood to serve an open plan dining room & kitchen to which there are no other openings.
- 10.53 In consideration of the privacy of the shared amenity space itself, all 4 of these windows would directly look onto this area, so there would be a lack of privacy for the future users. To assist in mitigating this impact, planting is proposed. More specifically, a raised bed is proposed abutting the side elevation of No.2 St Georges Street within which planting is proposed which is shown (on the supplied section plan) to rise in height to the top of the existing neighbouring ground floor windows. The first-floor windows would still be able to overlook this space. However, in such a tight-knit residential area a degree of overlooking into private amenity spaces is not uncommon. Furthermore, the space would not be private as it would be a shared facility. As such, this issue is not deemed sufficiently significant as to warrant refusal of the planning application for these reasons.
- 10.54 In consideration of loss of privacy from the side windows directly into the proposed new residential units themselves, the applicant's agent has not only supplied a proposed site section plan to demonstrate lines-of-sight and the existing situation, but also proposed additional screen planting close to the building to assist mitigating any loss of privacy that would be created from these neighbouring windows into the accommodation at lower ground floor level. In addition, further obscuring of the existing windows is proposed, whilst still allowing a degree of outlook from the top half of the windows.
- 10.55 At lower ground floor level, sole windows to 2 of the HMO bedrooms, the sole bedroom window to Apartment 1 and Apartment 1's bathroom window could be overlooked from all 4 windows within the side elevation of No.2 St George's Street which would be between approximately 10.6 metres and 11.9 metres away, varied due to the slight angled relationship. The section plan supplied along with the revised elevation plans show that the proposed planting in conjunction with the lower ground position of the residential units on this floor mean that a loss of privacy from the ground floor windows within the side elevation of No.2 St Georges St to the accommodation within the lower ground floor of the application building is unlikely to be of concern due to the angles involved & screening. From the first-floor side windows of No.2 St George's Street, these could impact the privacy of the occupiers of the units at lower ground floor and ground floor. At lower ground floor this would be to the proposed bedroom windows of the HMO (units 4 & 6) and the bedroom to Apartment 1. However, due to the oblique angle between these windows and those at lower ground floor in conjunction with the

proposed planting, this impact would be marginal as demonstrated on the supplied section plan. Between the first-floor windows in No.2 St George's Street and the accommodation proposed at ground floor on the application building, any loss of privacy impact will be minimised given the presence of obscured glazing already on the lower section of the window. The section plan submitted shows that the amenity of the proposed accommodation at first floor would be secure.

- 10.56 Overall, as any overlooking that would exist would be acute, on balance, it is deemed that loss of privacy for the future occupiers of the development from No.2 St Georges Street would be acceptable. This is subject to the majority of the proposed obscuration being secured by condition.
- 10.57 Another consideration for the amenity of the future occupiers would be the possible lack of outlook afforded to apartments 5-8. The mezzanine level of Apartment 5, where the sole bedroom is proposed, only benefits from natural light and outlook from the top of the windows on either side wall. Whilst not ideal, this first floor would still therefore be served by some degree of natural light and outlook.
- 10.58 For Apartment 6, at first floor, bedroom 1's outlook would be limited as a result of additional proposed obscuring of the existing window. Similarly, at second floor, the occupiers of bedrooms 2 and 3 would only benefit from natural light, but little outlook, as they would each only be served by only a rooflight positioned above head-height.
- 10.59 For Apartment 7, although it is currently proposed that the middle portion of all 3 windows be obscured at the first-floor on the northern side elevation, in order to allow a degree of outlook from the main living space for this apartment, it is proposed that it be conditioned that this additional obscuration is not included for one of these windows, the window shown in front of the sink on the floor plans. This particular additional obscuration is not considered essential to protect neighbouring amenity, given the oblique angle to the side windows on No.2 St Georges Street. At second floor, similar to Apartment 6, the bedrooms would only benefit from natural light, but little outlook, as they would each only be served by only a rooflight positioned above head-height. For Apartment 8 once again, some of the bedrooms would only be served by roof lights.
- 10.60 In relation to the HMO, all principal habitable rooms would benefit from natural light and outlook, albeit limited in relation to the shared open-plan living space.
- 10.61 It is recognised that this situation is not uncommon when converting buildings with loft spaces. It nonetheless represents a negative aspect of the scheme which needs to be weighed into the planning balance.

#### *Amenity space, cycle & bin storage*

- 10.62 There are no minimum garden space standards to which new dwellings need to achieve within the development plan. The shared space proposed in this instance is deemed to be of sufficient size for its future occupiers to carry out normal functions.
- 10.63 A dedicated cycle store is proposed within the rear shared amenity space as is an area for plant/outdoor storage. Cycle storage within Appendix C of the CELPS is 1 space per unit. The application proposes 8 units and an HMO, so 9 units in total. The cycle storage shown in the shared private amenity space shows space for 10 cycles. To ensure adequate covered provision is provided, in the event of approval, it is proposed that this be conditioned for subsequent approval.

- 10.64 Bin storage is proposed forward of the southern elevation fronting Grape Street. Overall, the level of outdoor amenity and what it comprises of is deemed to be adequate.

#### *Fire safety*

- 10.65 Cheshire Fire and Rescue have reviewed the application proposals and clarified standards in terms of providing access for pumping appliances and provision of fire mains. They have also recommended the fitting of sprinklers. In response, the applicant's agent has advised that this matter will be addressed as part of the RIBA Stage 4 technical design process. The applicant's agent has also advised that the requirements will also be fully reviewed and implemented through the Building Control application, ensuring compliance with the relevant fire safety regulations and in consultation with the Fire and Rescue Service where necessary.

#### Environmental amenity

- 10.66 The Council's Environmental Protection Officer's consider matters in relation to environmental amenity (ground, noise, air and light pollution). Upon review of the application proposals, Environmental Protection have raised no objections subject to the following conditions: Provision of low emission boilers, submission/approval of imported soil contaminated land verification and that works should stop should contamination be identified. A number of informatives are also proposed.
- 10.67 In the event of approval, the recommended condition in relation to low-emission gas boilers is not proposed to be included. This is because it is not considered to be enforceable.

#### Amenity conclusions

- 10.68 Subject to the implementation of conditions relating to obscure glazing, landscaping and contaminated land, the application proposals are deemed acceptable in relating to its impact upon neighbouring amenity and environmental amenity. However, the degree of outlook for the future occupiers of apartments 5-8 would be limited as a result of either the required obscuration of many of the existing windows being utilised, required in order to protect neighbouring amenity, or as a result of the inclusion of high-level roof lights. This is a negative aspect of the development that shall be considered as part of the overall planning balance.

#### **Landscape & Trees**

- 10.69 Policy SD2 of the CELPS states that development will be expected to respect and, where possible, enhance the landscape character of the area. Policy SE4 of the CELPS specifically relates to landscape considerations. It states that all development should conserve the landscape character and quality and where possible, enhance and effectively manage the historic, natural and man-made features that contribute to local distinctiveness. Policy ENV3 of the SADPD is linked to SE4 and Policy ENV5 of the SADPD sets out what should be included in landscaping plans. Policy SE5 of the CELPS relates to trees, hedgerows and woodland. The crux of the policy is to protect trees that provide a significant contribution to the amenity, biodiversity, landscape or historic character of the surrounding area. Policy ENV6 of the SADPD are largely reflective of this policy.

- 10.70 There are no tree issues associated with this proposal and given the site's impact within the Macclesfield Settlement boundary, there are no landscape designations or wider landscape considerations.
- 10.71 The main consideration would be the proposed landscaping of the site. The application proposes a landscaped shared private amenity space. This will benefit the future occupiers but also assist in mitigating any loss of privacy concerns. In order to ensure that the appropriate detail is secured, along with suitable boundary treatments, in the event of approval, it is proposed that this detail be conditioned for subsequent approval.

## **Ecology**

- 10.72 Policy SE3 of the CELPS states that developments that are likely to have a significant adverse impact on a site with legally protected species or priority habitats (to name a few), will not be permitted except where the reason for or benefits of the proposed development outweigh the impact of the development. Policy ENV1 of the SADPD relates to ecological networks and Policy ENV2 relates to ecological mitigation.

### Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

- 10.73 The Council's Ecology Officers are satisfied that the proposed works are exempt from statutory Biodiversity Net Gain. Consequently, the deemed gain condition does not apply, and a biodiversity metric is not considered necessary.

### Bats

- 10.74 It is advised that there is a reasonable likelihood that bats will not be impacted by the proposed works. Consequently, a protected species survey is considered to be disproportionate in this instance.

### Birds

- 10.75 The existing church has the potential to support nesting birds, which are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. A breeding birds compliance condition is therefore recommended with any planning approval.

### Ecological Enhancements

- 10.76 The site falls within Cheshire East Council's ecological network restoration areas, which forms part of the SADPD. Ecological enhancements are therefore recommended, in line with local policy ENV 1. In the event of approval, this is recommended as a condition.
- 10.77 Overall, subject to the above recommendations, the application proposals are deemed acceptable in relation to the ecology policies of the development plan.

## **Flood Risk and Drainage**

- 10.78 Policy SE13 of the CELPS relates to Flood Risk and Water Management. The crux of this policy is to ensure development integrate measures for sustainable water management to reduce flood risk. Policy ENV16 of the SADPD refers to surface water management and flood risk.

- 10.79 The application site lies entirely within a Flood Zone 1, the lowest flood risk category. In addition, the site is only classified as having a 'very low' yearly chance of flooding both now and in the future in relation to surface water, river or sea water or from groundwater or reservoirs.
- 10.80 Nonetheless, during the application process, the LLFA objected to the proposed development due to the absence of a detailed surface water drainage strategy and Flood Risk Assessment. Subsequently, during the application process, a 'Flood Risk Assessment, Surface Water Drainage Strategy and Foul Water Drainage Strategy' was received, dated June 2025. The key findings of this strategy were that; it is proposed that the surface water from the southern part of the site be discharged to the nearest surface water sewer beneath Grapes Street and surface water from the northern part of the site be discharged into the combined sewer beneath St Georges Street. Both outfalls would discharge at a rate of 2.0 l/s. A surface water drainage strategy is appended to the document. A maintenance schedule is also included. Infiltration and discharge into existing surface waters have been ruled out. Infiltration has been ruled out due to a lack of space and there are no watercourses in the sites immediate vicinity. With regards to foul drainage, this is proposed to be discharged into the combined sewer beneath St Georges Street via a closed pipe, gravity fed network. Confirmation from United Utilities would be required. Both of these drainage solutions have been concluded without the benefit of CCTV surveys.
- 10.81 The LLFA have reviewed this information and have sought further information relating to the proposed pipe diameters, slope angles, cover levels and invert levels in order to be satisfied that the method of drainage will be appropriate.
- 10.82 In order to ensure that appropriate drainage is secured and given that the site does not lie within an area subject to flood risk, it is proposed that full drainage details be submitted to the Council for approval prior to commencement of development. Subject to this condition, the application proposals are deemed to be acceptable in flood risk and drainage terms.

### **Manchester Airport**

- 10.83 Policy GEN5 of the SADPD states that development that would adversely affect the operational integrity or safety of any officially safeguarded civil aerodrome or associated navigation aids, radio aids or telecommunications systems will not be permitted.
- 10.84 The Safeguarding Authority for Manchester Airport assessed the original proposals and its potential to conflict aerodrome Safeguarding criteria and raised no objections. They did not comment on the revisions suggesting that their position remains unchanged. As such, the proposals are deemed acceptable in relation to Policy GE5 of the SADPD.

### **House in Multiple Occupation (HMO)**

- 10.85 As part of the application proposals, a 6-bedroomed HMO is proposed. This is sought within the lower ground floor of the building with access gained from steps leading down to a shared front door on the southern, side elevation.
- 10.86 Policy HOU4 of the SADPD specifically deals with HMOs'. The policy states that such development would be acceptable provided that:

- i. the number of existing HMOs within 50 metres of the application site does not exceed 10% of the total number of dwellings;*
- ii. the extended or proposed HMO would not 'sandwich' an existing dwelling (C3) between two HMOs;*
- iii. the proposal would not have an adverse impact on:*
  - a. the character and appearance of the property or the local area;*
  - b. on-street car parking levels;*
  - c. the capacity of local services/facilities; or*
  - d. the amenity or environment of surrounding occupiers;*
- iv. the property is of a size, whereby the proposed layout, room sizes, daylight provision, range of facilities and external amenity space of the HMO would ensure an adequate standard of residential amenity for future occupiers;*
- v. adequate provision is made in the curtilage of the dwelling for covered cycle parking; and*
- vi. adequate provision is made in the site for waste and recycling storage.*

- 10.87 In response, a planning history search 50 metres in every direction shows the provision of only 1 other existing HMO. As such, the number of HMO's within 50 metres of the application site does not exceed 10% of the total number of dwellings, satisfying criterion HOU4 (1)(i).
- 10.88 The application site lies on the corner of St George's Street and Grapes Street. In consideration as to whether the site would sandwich an existing C3 dwelling between two HMO's, this would not be the case given that the only other known HMO nearby is not adjacent to the application site. As such, the application proposals are acceptable in relation to the requirements of HOU4(1)(ii).
- 10.89 Given the minimal external alterations proposed and in the absence of an objection in relation to the impact of the development upon the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, it is not deemed that the application proposals would have an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the area, satisfying HOU4(1)(iii)(a).
- 10.90 It has already been explained why the substandard level of off-street parking proposed in this instance is considered acceptable, meaning no conflict with HOU4(1)(iii)(b).
- 10.91 It is not considered that the application proposals would have a detrimental impact upon the capacity of local services and facilities given the sites location within a Principal Town and within walking distance of the town centre, a location where such facilities are abundant. The scheme would therefore be acceptable in relation to HOU4(1)(iii)(c).
- 10.92 With regards to neighbouring amenity, the application proposals would not result in any adverse impact upon the amenity of environment of surrounding occupiers. In relation to the amenity of the future occupiers, this has been assessed as being acceptable in relation to the HMO, therefore adhering with HOU4(1)(iv).
- 10.93 Adequate space is provided for both cycle storage and bin storage, adhering with the requirements of HOU4(1)(v) and (vi), subject to the detail of the required covered cycle storage being conditioned.

- 10.94 Overall, the HMO element of the proposals are deemed to adhere with the requirements of Policy HOU4.

### **Other matters**

- 10.95 The application proposals do not trigger any affordable housing, education, health of public open space requirements.
- 10.96 In response to concerns raised as part of the public consultation but not addressed to date, it has been requested that in the event of approval, permitted development rights be removed to prevent the ground floor apartment from being converted into 4 more HMO rooms. The proposed Lower Ground Floor HMO would be a 6-room HMO, classified as a 'small HMO'. Should a single, further room be incorporated into this HMO in the future, it would change the use class of the HMO from C4 to sui generis, which in turn, would require planning permission in its own right. As such, it is not deemed necessary to remove permitted development rights as suggested for this eventuality.

## **11. PLANNING BALANCE/CONCLUSION**

- 11.1 The principle of converting this vacant church into residential use, comprising of 8 apartments and an HMO in this location, in Macclesfield, a Principal Town, is deemed acceptable. Indeed, the provision of additional housing in a sustainable location is welcomed in the absence of a 5-year housing land supply. This is afforded significant weight.
- 11.2 The change of use would re-use a vacant building deemed to represent a Non-Designated Heritage Asset (NDHA). The future of heritage assets should be given great weight in planning decisions, and securing a viable reuse is often the most effective way to ensure their long-term survival. Given that the building has been vacant for over 3 years, the heritage benefits of its re-use is afforded significant weight.
- 11.3 Whilst the level of off-street parking spaces proposed falls significantly below Council standards, following the undertaking of a parking study that showed provision of a more than adequate amount of on-street parking in an area where this is characteristic in conjunction with the sustainable location of the site and the small-scale nature of some of the residential units proposed, the under provision is considered to be acceptable in this instance.
- 11.4 Subject to conditions, the application proposals would not result in any neighbouring amenity concerns or result in environmental amenity concerns. However, the outlook from numerous principal habitable rooms for the future occupiers of apartments 5-8 would be limited either as a result of required additional obscuration of existing windows or because the only outlook comes in the form of roof lights positioned above head height.
- 11.5 In response to this concern, it is not uncommon for the conversion of buildings that utilise loft spaces to be afforded limited outlook as a consequence of fully utilising the building being converted. There often needs to be a balance between ensuring a suitable degree of amenity of both existing and future amenity and securing a design that respects the character and appearance of the building being converted. In this instance, the proposed conversion would ensure that the character and appearance of the building of heritage value would be retained and the carefully proposed obscuration

and positioning of rooflights would protect neighbouring amenity. The consequence of this is that the degree of outlook to some of the proposed apartments would be limited. It is noted that for each of the apartments impacted, the main open-plan living spaces to these homes, the area within which the majority of the future occupier's time is likely to be spent, would be afforded outlook. It's the outlook from some of the bedrooms in apartments 5-8, that would be limited. This harm is afforded moderate weight in the context of the development as a whole.

- 11.6 The development would not harm the character and appearance of the Macclesfield (High Street) Conservation Area and would result in no archaeological, trees, landscape, ecology, flood risk or flight safety concerns, subject to conditions where necessary.
- 11.7 Overall, it is considered that the significant benefits of providing new residential accommodation in a Principal Town in the absence of a 5-year housing land supply, within walking distance to public services and facilities along with the benefits of re-using and therefore retaining a NDHA outweigh the moderate harm relating to a lack of outlook for the future occupiers of apartments 5-8. As such on balance, the application proposals are recommended for approval.

## **12. RECOMMENDATION**

**APPROVE** subject to the following conditions.

- 1. Time limit for implementation (3 years)**
- 2. Development in accordance with approved plans**
- 3. Submission/approval of external material details**
- 4. Obscured windows to be provided.**
- 5. Submission/approval of imported soil contaminated land verification**
- 6. Works should stop should contamination be identified.**
- 7. Submission/approval of landscaping (incl boundary treatment)**
- 8. Landscaping – implementation**
- 9. Breeding birds protection**
- 10. Submission/approval of ecological enhancement scheme**
- 11. Submission/approval of drainage details**
- 12. Submission/approval of covered cycle storage**

*In the event of any changes being needed to the wording of the Committee's decision (such as to delete, vary or add conditions / informatives / planning obligations or reasons for approval / refusal) prior to the decision being issued, the Head of Planning has delegated authority to do so in consultation with the Chair of the Northern Planning Committee, provided that the changes do not exceed the substantive nature of the Committee's decision*

