

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

7 July 2010

AUTHOR/S: Executive Director (Operational Services)/
Corporate Manager (Planning and New Communities)

S/1780/09/F – LONGSTANTON
Slate North Isle of Church Roof at All Saints Church, Rampton Road
for Reverend Malcolm Raby

Recommendation: Refusal

Date for Determination: 29 January 2010

Notes:

This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination on the recommendation of an elected member of the District Council.

Site and Proposal

1. All Saints Church is Grade I Listed Building, mostly mid to late 14th century, of fieldstone, clunch, limestone, brick and plain tile roof to the main roof and a previous lead roof to the north isle. The Church is located at the junction of Rampton Road, Woodside and the High Street and is surrounded by residential dwellings with the Rectory positioned to the north of the site. The Church falls within Longstanton Conservation Area.
2. The planning application, registered on 4 December 2009, seeks to install natural Welsh slate to the roof of the single storey, north aisle of the Church, which currently has a temporary felt roof following the burglary of the previous lead roof in July 2007.

Planning History

3. None.

Planning Policy

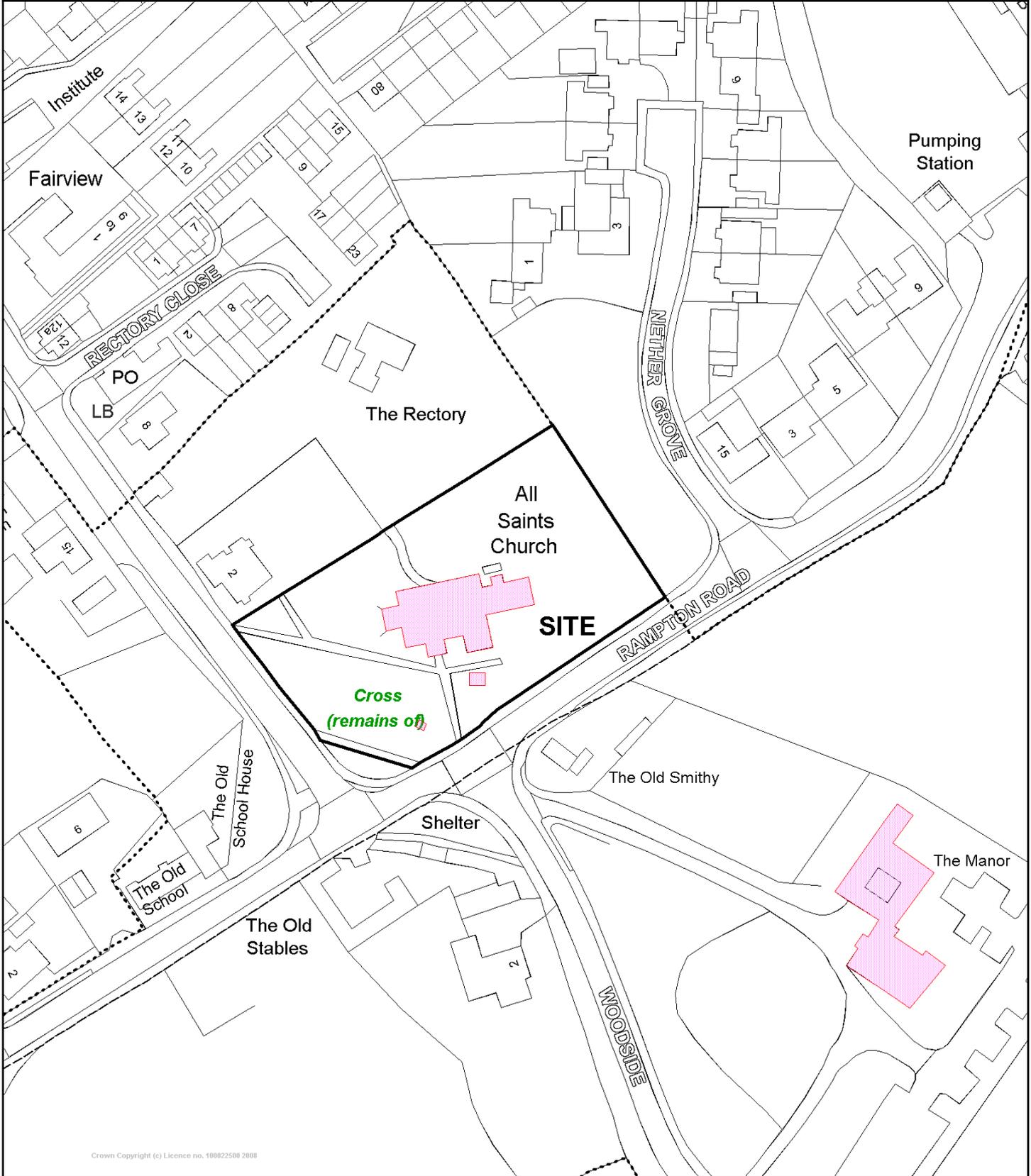
4. **National Policy**

Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment
Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide

5. **Local Development Framework Development Control Policies (Adopted July 2007):**

DP/1 (Sustainable Development), **DP/2** (Design of New Development), **DP/3** (Development Criteria), **DP/7** (Development Frameworks), **CH/3** (Listed Buildings) and **CH/5** (Conservation Areas).

6. **Local Development Framework Supplementary Planning Documents:**
Listed Buildings SPD - Adopted July 2009



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Scale 1/1250 Date 21/6/2010

Centre = 539915 E 266422 N

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Consultation

7. **Longstanton Parish Council** - Recommends approval with all materials in keeping with the existing building.
8. **Listed Building Officer** - Recommends refusal. The original lead roof was stolen several years ago and there is a concern about replacing the lead for it just to be stolen again. It is acknowledged that the DAC and English Heritage have been involved and that they are supportive of the replacement roof material being slate. However, the team have serious reservations about introducing a new material on a building that never had slate. In addition, slate is inappropriate on a structure that is 15/16th century and is out of character. Any material needs to either be a temporary solution until lead can be renewed or it needs to be compatible with the age and character of the building. Lead is historically accurate and appropriate and it is what was there.
9. **English Heritage** - Due to the difficulty of detailing a lead roof covering on this roof slope we have accepted the proposed change of materials. We have in principle supported the approach currently on the table; and it does not look as if EH is likely to want to change its recommendation. Conservation is a difficult subject where compromises have to be made the whole time and my own personal view was always that the use of slate in this situation would not cause major loss of understanding of the history of the church even while adding to its complexity. I will refrain from quoting from Venturi, but we must remember that at the moment there is no roof on the North aisle at all.

Representations

10. **District Councillor Brian Burling** – Requests that the application be determined by full Planning Committee due to the following reasons: this is a specialist application, the use of slate as an alternative is not inappropriate, the use of slate does not have any adverse visual impact on this Listed Building, slate has been approved by the Ely Diocese and English Heritage and the church is unable to find an insurer to cover the full loss of any further theft of lead from its premises.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

11. The key issues to be judged in the determination of the application are the impact of the development on the Grade I Listed Building.

Impact on the Listed Building

12. The proposal is due to the theft of lead from the roof approximately two years ago during the wave of thefts at that period due to the sudden increase in prices of lead worldwide. Although the theft of lead from roofs is not as common now, there is still a risk which is of concern to the parish. Should the lead be stolen, there is a limit on the value of a claim which is lower than the cost of the work. The proposal has been discussed amongst officers with sight of the insurance policy from Ecclesiastical Insurance, who are the insurers dealing with churches and it acknowledged that the church already has a light and camera on the tower.
13. The fundamental concern relates to the unsuitability of slate in the proposal to change the material of the roof of the Tudor aisle. Slate is a material only used in South Cambridgeshire from the nineteenth century onwards. Because this aisle previously

had a parapet, it also creates an awkward junction at eaves level where there has to be a wide strip of lead at a flatter angle below the slate at eaves level.

14. The loss of lead is recognised to be a nationwide problem and it has been considered in policy making. Because lead is a long-lasting traditional material that can survive for many hundreds of years, the priority would be to reinstate it. Paragraphs 17.34-17.36 of the Listed Buildings SPD recommends that stolen lead is replaced on a like-for-like basis but that alternatives may be looked at if it is repeatedly stolen, when they can be temporary until the price of metal goes down so that the appropriate material can be replaced at some point in the future. It also notes that in some cases the Council may sometimes support terne-coated (stainless) steel or sarnafil (the lead-finish plastic sheet alternative) where thefts are a particular problem. Both of these look like lead from a distance and provide a medium term solution whilst the problem persists.
15. The English Heritage Inspector did not support terne-coated stainless steel on the basis of the detail at the roof edge where the roof flattens out, but felt that slate may be an alternative in practical terms. The Listed Buildings Officer does not support this use of slate as it does not take into account the period of the building and the palette of materials characteristic of this locality at the time. It would also create a precedent for a longer term change to the character of church roofs in the area, most of which predate the nineteenth century.
16. PPS5 replaces PPG15 and Policies HE7.5, HE9.5 and HE10 relate to the design of alterations. They say that local authorities should take into account the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of the historic environment, and that consideration of design should include the materials. PPS5 Practice Guide paragraph 80 notes that a successful scheme is one that has taken into account the diversity or uniformity in style, construction, materials, detailing, decoration and period of existing buildings and spaces.

Conclusion

17. I therefore recommend refusal of the application due to the construction, materials and details of the proposed slate roof, which would be contrary to the style, design and period of the historic aisle that forms an important part of the interest and character of the Grade I Listed Building. The proposal is contrary to PPS5 and CH/3.

Recommendation

18. That the application is refused, for the following reasons:

The proposal would harm the special character and appearance of this Grade I Listed Church due to the construction, materials and details of the proposed slate roof, which would be contrary to the style, design and period of the historic aisle that forms an important part of the interest and character of the Grade I Listed Building. The proposal is therefore considered to be contrary to Policy CH/3 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies DPD 2007 (DPD) and policies HE7 and HE9 of Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (including HE7.1, 7.2, 7.4 and HE9.1, 9.2 9.4) and PPS 5 Historic Environment Planning Policy Practice Guide (including 86, 111, 178 and 182).

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment
- Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide
- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Development Control Policies, adopted July 2007.
- Listed Buildings SPD - Adopted July 2009

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