

Salem Baptist Chapel, Brynhyfryd Terrace, Seven Sisters, Neath, SA10 9BA



**Proposed Conversion of Existing Disused Place of Worship
(D1) to a Domestic Residence (C3)**

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

1. Introduction

This design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the refurbishment of the Salem Baptist Chapel, Brynhyfryd Terrace, Seven sisters, Neath SA10 9BA

Salem is a disused Chapel situated in Brynhyfryd Terrace, which is the main road through Seven Sisters. The chapel was first built in 1899 and further developed in 1911 and served the parish of Seven Sisters until 2018. Unfortunately due to the age of the chapel, the ever increasing cost of repair, maintenance and the ever dwindling membership numbers , the chapel has now become surplus to requirements.

2. The Site History and Vision

The original building was constructed in 1899 of local materials, with an internal first floor constructed slightly later in 1911. The walls are constructed of 600mm loose filled stone, with all external elevations being of sand/cement rendering.

The chapel is similar to many other valley chapels of this period, as it contained within stone enclosure walls with square gate piers to the entrance off Brynhyfryd Terrace. The original Wrought Iron gates, railings still remain.

The front elevation is a sand/cement render, with rectangular dark oak coloured wooden windows and a dark oak U-pvc door.

The side and rear elevations are sand/cement rendered finish, with Dark Oak U-pvc windows to both the ground floor and first floor elevations.

The entrance to the church is access off the main highway and leads to the Ground floor. Disabled access to the church Ground floor is via the front entrance, which is just above the level of the existing street highway.

The property is bounded by an active Police Station to the rear. There are neighbouring properties to the opposite side of the Brynhyfryd Terrace highway, approximately 20m from the main chapel. There is an existing day centre with parking to the side of Salem chapel which is in use, albeit very rarely.

Sometime after the original construction, a rear vestry addition was constructed in more modern building techniques, which currently house male and female WC's. The proposed application is re-use these rooms into a Utility area to one side and fully fitted Wet room to the other side. There is no requirement to demolish this structure to create further amenity space as the existing amenity space within the boundary walls exceeds 250m² in its current layout.

The proposed development would include a dropped curb off the main Brynhyfryd Terrace highway to access the side of Salem Baptist chapel. There is sufficient space to the left side of the front elevation to create 3 car parking spaces plus a turning area within the property boundary so vehicles would access and egress the property in forward gears.

The chapel has deteriorated over a number of years, with only emergency maintenance being undertaken when still in use (servicing of fire extinguishers, boilers, roof, gutters). There are signs of dry rot and water ingress within the building, both of which need to be addressed urgently, to prevent further damage to this historic building.

3. Site Analysis – Opportunities and Constraints

The front of the site is defined by Brynhyfryd Terrace, the rear of the building is bounded by an existing police station.

The proposal for the dwelling is to introduce a permanent first floor addition, which will not cut across the existing windows. The ground floor will consist of an entrance hall, Store/Boot Room, Wet Room, Utility Room, Two living rooms, Kitchen with Dining facility and central hallway.

The first floor will consist of 3 bedrooms, 3 en-suite bathrooms with storage and dressing facility and 1 Study/Home Office room.

Whilst this chapel is not listed, CADW have identified Three courses of action for chapel, depending on their historic importance. The first being that where the chapel is of such architectural and/or historic importance, that their preservation is unquestioned. The Second action is where the chapel who's demolition can be accepted without real loss to the built heritage. A Third action is where the chapel who's preservation is dependent upon suitable adaption to a viable alternative use.

It is the latter category which we believe would best suite Salem Baptist Chapel.

Planning Policy H5

This policy is to optimise the use of existing housing stock in urban areas, and to assist its restoration and conversion to more immediately needed forms of housing. It also supports the use of other suitable land and buildings to maximise new housing opportunities within the communities in the County Borough where they are most needed.

4.7.5 The conversion of other buildings to residential use may also be supported. Conversion of redundant buildings will make more efficient use of the buildings, but can also assist in maintaining the vitality and viability of the area, and can contribute towards reduction in local crime.

Policy EV31

The development meets Policy EV31 as the proposed development intends to retain as much of the original character of the chapel as possible. Where original materials are being replaced, the new material will be selected with to match the existing.

Policy EV36

The development meets policy EV36 as the chapel is presently redundant. The utilisation of floor space for residential will contribute towards the area.

3.13.16 – There is a presumption in favour of the preservation and conversion where necessary, of listed buildings and those buildings located in conservation areas. However such consideration should also be given to other unprotected historic buildings of local and vernacular interest. It is accepted that occasionally old buildings may reach the end of their useful life even after their original use may have disappeared, and should make way for new development. However many have not yet reached that stage, and can with the exercise of a little imagination be creatively reused and thereby enhance the economic and social activity of an area. The same considerations may also apply to an historic building, part of which may be beneficial use, but elsewhere may have vacant, or under-used floor space.

8.22.2 - Protected Species

Whilst there is no evidence of recent activity, a Bat survey will be carried out as part of the planning submission. The survey will take place as soon as the bats return in March/April. The development will make provision for bats, should any evidence be found during the survey.

8.22.3 – Disabled Access

This should pose no problem as the flat site with provisions already in place to access and egress both the ground floor and basement levels in line with current policies and building regulations.

4 Design & Character

The owners intend to convert the chapel into a 4 bedroom dwelling for their own family occupation. The original characteristics and workmanship on the chapel are to be retained and enhanced where possible using current building methods and materials. Reclaimed materials are to be sought and added to enhance the buildings history. Reclaimed/stripped Victorian floorboards, existing pew seating, welsh slate flooring are all to be incorporated back into the chapel. There are areas where modern construction needs to be incorporate to meet current building regulations and the introduction on new White U-pvc double glazed windows and Black composite door.

The existing external rendering is to be repaired where required and painted White finish. The existing roof slates are to be replaced with cement fibre (reconstituted) roof tiles to give a natural slate effect, whilst offering all the benefits of new construction methods.

The fascias, soffits, guttering and downpipes are all to be Black U-pvc.

Boundary walls are constructed in stone and these are all to remain, with further timber feather edge board installed to raise the boundary wall heights to allow more privacy to the external amenity areas of the property. A 4m section of the front elevation boundary wall is to be partially demolished to make access for off street car parking.

5. Vehicular and Pedestrian Access

The vehicular access is planned to be via the front elevation of the main Brynhyfryd Terrace Highway, via dropped curb. A section of the existing boundary wall is to be demolished to make way for off road car parking for 3 cars together with a turning area within the boundary of the proposed development.

6. Community Safety

This application is to bring a disused building back into the community. By virtue of the building being unoccupied, this could increase the risk of vandalism and further damage to this and adjoining properties. Furthermore, external lighting to the front and rear of the building will only enhance the security of this and the neighbouring dwellings.

7. Environmental and Sustainability

The proposal will make use of as many of the existing items within the chapel for re-use in the new development. The existing floorboards, pitch pine pews (even the wooden collection tins and hymn board) are to be incorporated back into the building. Further reclaimed period features such as cast iron Victorian radiators, cast iron fire places, Welsh slate flooring, Victorian floor tiles are all planned to be incorporated in the building.

All materials are to be sourced from local suppliers and all labour is from the local community and surrounding areas. The development will aid the local economy and create employment opportunities for local tradesmen.

High levels of insulation are to be incorporated back into the building, to meet the required building regulation requirements.

The client is happy to discuss any bat activity with the local authority and will incorporate proposals for the safeguard of any existing bats.

8. Movement and Access

The development will comply with the DDA regulations as far as practicable and the ground floor, doors will be wheelchair friendly, socket locations and heights will be set mid height and not low level.

9. Conclusion and closing statement

In applying for full planning permission and change of use, we believe that we have shown and demonstrated the development:

1. Meets the Local authority's development requirements and policies.
- 2 Does not alter or compromise the existing building or surrounding landscape.
3. Provides accommodation to an area where it is much needed.
4. Utilises a current redundant/derelict building, which would be lost should urgent action and change of use not be taken.
5. The building is of no further use as a D1 classification.

Salem Baptist Chapel is close to the hearts of many parishioners, family, friends, relatives and neighbours, who all wish to see the chapel saved from ruin. All of the local community whom the applicant has spoken with, have all given their approval (and blessing) that the chapel gains the benefits of full planning approval and the change use from a disused/derelict chapel, into a 4 bedroom family home. The thought of the chapel potentially being lost through dis-repair and lack of viable usage has brought great sadness to all of the local community. The applicant is prepared to invest greatly into this historic building, and bring it back to its former glory, which can be appreciated by all in the surrounding community and their own family, for many generations to come.