

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT (appendix) FOR THE VESTRY, BETHEL CHAPEL

Submitted to NPT Planning department; February 15, 2022

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INTRODUCTION

The following appendix to the main Heritage Impact document (attached) contains information relating to proposed alterations to the Vestry, Bethel Chapel, which is located at Oakwood, Pontrhydyfen, NPT, SA12 9SA

The content of this assessment relates to very minor alterations to the rear (West facing aspect) of the Vestry, at the rear of the property, to accommodate a new central heating system which we hope to have fitted in the near future.

Bethel Chapel was first built in 1850, then rebuilt in 1903 It is/was a Welsh Baptist chapel, attended by locals from Oakwood & Pontrhydyfen from its' inception, until the mid-1990's, when the congregation started to dwindle, from the hundreds of its' heyday, to several dozen faithful members by the turn of the 21st century.

The congregation continued to attend, albeit in the Vestry (at the rear of Bethel) until 2010 or so, when Bethel finally closed its' doors.

I purchased the building in 2012 from the Welsh Baptist Chapel and successfully applied for 'change of use' planning from 'place of worship' to 'place of dwelling' and proceeded to undertake a sympathetic restoration of the Vestry into a 3-bedroom family home, where I have lived happily with my wife and two children, ever since.

We have restored the Vestry in accordance with modern building regulations whilst simultaneously utilising, recycling and re-purposing items and especially timber that we have managed to salvage from the Chapel itself, notably...

- Pitch pine planks from pew seats used as the back door, kitchen door, staircase, window sills and bedroom doors.
- Rails from the backs of the pews used as door frames and skirting boards
- Inlay panels from the pew backs as wall coverings in our living room and stairwell
- Re-using pitch pine parquet flooring blocks from within the chapel for our living room floor.
- Pew backs as wall panels in our living room.
- Utilising pitch pine floorboards from the Chapel in our kitchen and dining room.

- Our kitchen is made entirely from pitch pine from salvaged pews.
- Our staircase is made entirely of reclaimed pew seats, plus handrails and newel post reclaimed from the chapel pulpit.
- We have used decorative wrought iron work, salvaged from the old pulpit within the chapel, in our upstairs landing handrail as well as 24" decorative wrought iron pillars integrated into our kitchen units

It would, obviously, have been easier, cheaper and more straightforward to do none of this and to just carry out a 'bog-standard' house renovation, but our intention, was, and still is, to keep any work we do, not only to a high standard and to meet modern building regulations but to maintain the 'feel' of an old building and effect sympathetic renovations, appropriate for a Grade-11 listed property.

REASON FOR APPLICATION.

We have, for the past 8 years or so, solely relied upon a 26kW woodburning stove (with back-boiler) to provide us with our heating and hot water, in the colder months (October - April) and an immersion heater for hot water during the milder/Summer months.

However, as we get older (my wife and I are both now retired), we are finding that with the increasing amount of time spent at home (as we are not at work for 8 - 10 hrs./day) it is becoming increasingly unrealistic, impractical and downright difficult to store and manage our wood supply to keep the fire lit for 16hrs a day, rather than the six hours or so we did when we were both at work.

We were approached in the Autumn of 2021 by representatives of NPTCBC's 'Warmer Homes' scheme as likely candidates for free central heating as we have previously had no gas supply to the property.

It is to this end that we are applying for planning permission to install gas central heating to the Vestry - to make keeping our home warm more practical, easier to manage and hopefully, lessen our fuel bills whilst at the same time enable us to reduce our 'carbon footprint' by burning less wood, each Winter.

CURRENT & PROPOSED HEATING SYSTEMS

Our existing woodburning stove has a back boiler system, which heats 8 radiators within the Vestry (see attached drawing PB-011).

The revised (gas central heating) system will add two more radiators to the existing system, thus lessening dependence on wood as our (current) primary heating source.

These two, additional radiators will be fitted on the GROUND floor only, as per drawing, there is NO CHANGE to the existing first floor radiator layout.

We will retain the woodburning stove in our living room, but it will feed just one radiator (in the next room - our dining room), as a 'standalone' system - the solitary radiator will effectively act as a miniature circuit for the water within the back boiler to circulate.

Two radiators will be added to the newly-formed gas central heating system, one in the living room, the other in the dining room (see attached drawing PB-011). Both of these radiators will be fixed to internal, block walls, standing on cast-iron feet, but steadied by brackets, fixed to the block walls by proprietary, 'rawl-plug' style anchors (see radiator spec sheet - attached) NOT fixed to external stone walls, and will be of a traditional, column radiator design, (see drawing, spec sheet and fitting instructions, attached) rather than a modern, contemporary design.

EXTERNAL VISUAL IMPACT

The alteration to the exterior of the property will be minimal, with only ONE brick having to be removed, cut in half to accommodate the entry of the gas pipe into the property, and a repair to the mortar (carried out with lime mortar mix) made good after the insertion of the gas pipe, at the position shown on the attached drawings.

For the associated vent for the 'Combi-type' boiler TWO bricks would need to be removed 1.8m above the entry point of the gas pip and once again, any mortar repairs carried out with a lime mortar mix.

The only externally visible clue to be seen will be the 100mm diameter vent and its' 150mm diameter cowling.

The gas meter will be fitted INTERNALLY (in the downstairs cloakroom, adjacent to the current hot water tank, and directly below the combi-boiler), so the external visual impact of this would not be an issue.

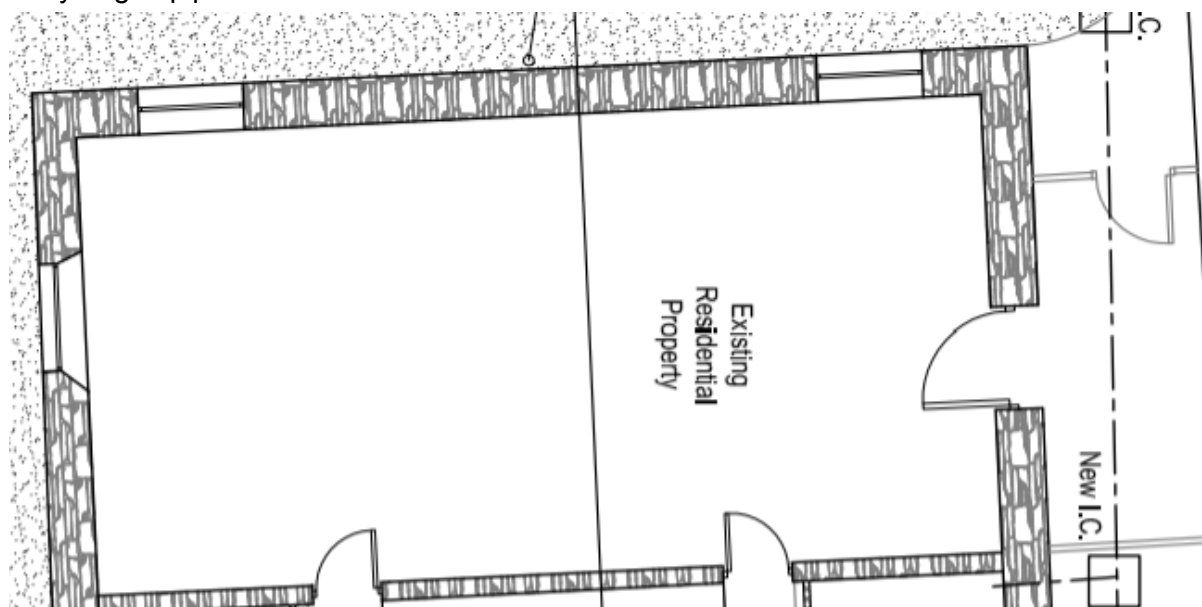
The 30kw combi boiler itself will also be mounted in the downstairs cloakroom (see att. drawings) and vented in accordance with Part J (heat producing appliances) of the building regulations through the West facing rear wall at a height of approximately 1.8m.

I attach a copy of Part J of the Welsh Government building regulations (Combustion appliances and fuel storage systems) for clarity.

The visible (external) portion of the the flue will be finished in BLACK (rather than white) to blend in with existing rainwater goods and reduce any adverse visual impact.



Entry of gas pipe here.....><



SUMMARY

We sincerely hope that this application will be looked upon favourably by NPT planning, as we are finding that our current, woodburning stove-fuelled central heating system is becoming increasingly difficult to manage as we get older.

We are acutely aware of the rising cost of gas central heating, but still consider this as a better option for us as we approach our sixties, as purchasing, storing and managing our wood supply is becoming increasingly difficult as we get older.

The Warmer Homes scheme run by NPTCBC comes to an end at the end of March 2022 and we are conscious that this deadline is rapidly approaching.

Uptake of this scheme by us, as householders, could save us thousands of pounds in installation as well as time, money and effort in the future.

Yours sincerely....Peter & Jacqueline Bowen