

Design and Access Statement

**Former St Catherine's Church and Hall Old Road
Neath, Port Talbot, SA11 2BT**

**Change the use of Church hall (Class D1) to a 2-
bedroom Dwelling (Class C3)**

June 2024

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1. Overview

This document is prepared to assist in the determination of the Planning and Listed Building application as required by *The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Wales) Regulations 2012* and *Section 7 Annex Development Management Manual*¹

The guidance within Development Management Manual - Revision 2 May 2017 states

20.2.09 A DAS is required to accompany all applications for listed building consent. Whilst a complete statement is required for exterior works, the access element of the statement is not required for interior works.

20.2.10 In relation to design, a DAS accompanying a listed building consent application must explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the works. The DAS must explain those principles and concepts in relation to the following aspects of the works:

- appearance
- environmental sustainability
- layout
- scale

20.2.11 A DAS must also explain how the design principles and concepts take account of:

- the special architectural or historic importance of the building

¹ <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-03/section-7-annex-planning-applications-lists-of-validation-requirements.pdf>

- the particular physical features of the building that justify its designation as a listed building
- the building's setting

20.2.12 In relation to access, a DAS accompanying a listed building consent application (exterior works only) must explain:

The policy or approach to access, including:

- i. what alternative means of access have been considered
- ii. how policies relating to access in the development plan have been taken into account

How the policy or approach adopted as to access takes account of:

- i. the special architectural or historic importance of the building
- ii. the particular physical features of the building that justify its designation as a listed building
- iii. and the building's setting

How any specific issues which might affect access to the building have been addressed

How features which ensure access to the building will be maintained

2. Introduction and Site Location

Application

This application is for the provision/reinstatement of a door to the rear ground floor elevation and external repairs.

Planning Context

National Policy

There are key objectives contained within Planning Policy Wales Edition 12 February 2021 (PPW) sets a clear framework that supports the application.

TAN 24 The Historic Environment²

Local Policy

The development plan for the site is the Neath Port Talbot Local Development (LDP). The Council adopted the plan on 27th January 2016

Policy Criteria

LDP Policy

SP21 Built Environment and Historic Heritage

BE1 Design

² <https://gov.wales/technical-advice-note-tan-24-historic-environment>

BE2 Buildings of Local importance

SP1 Climate Change

SP2 Health

SP3 Sustainable Communities

SC2 Protection of Existing Community Facilities

SP4 Infrastructure.

SP21 Built Environment and historic heritage

Supplementary Planning Guidance

SPG Design (July 2017) ³

SPG Parking Standards October 2016 (Parking Standards SPG) ⁴

3. Design Principles and Concepts.

The application site is within the grounds of a grade II Listed Building. The church was listed in 1989 but the listing did not include a reference to the Hall the subject of the application. However, as a curtilage building the listing covers the Hall

The site is located in a prominent location on the junction of School road and Old Road.

The listing description records the following details

³ https://www.npt.gov.uk/media/7237/spg_design_july17.pdf

⁴ https://www.npt.gov.uk/PDF/spg_parking_standards_oct16.pdf

CADW Ref 11816

History

The church was Church, built 1888-91 to designs of J.Coates Carter, in collaboration with D.M.Davies of Neath. Foundation stone in west wall records that 'this memorial stone was laid by Miss Place of Neath on asite given by Edward Evans esq of Eaglesbush Neath March 1889. The hall, the subject of the application was built in the 1980s

Exterior

Tall aisled hall church in austere early gothic style on a sloping site. Bull nosed snecked masonry, ashlar dressings, including irregular stressed quoins, continuous sill and impost bands, plain corbels and plinth. Steep slate roofs, canted over aisles. Raking gable parapets with cross finials. Tall slate-hung fleche with timber louvred band on ridge is the only external differentiation of nave and chancel.

Seven bay S aisle stops short of E end. Gabled and buttressed porch to left, with moulded pointed arched entrance with iron gates, and niche in gable apex above. Ovolo moulding to inner doorway. Similar detail to shallow porch at right end of aisle. 5 lancet windows between these porches, with hoodmoulds, impost and sill bands. Single lancets to W and E end of aisle. Similar detail to 8 bay N aisle, and taller lancets to gabled vestry at E end. Twin circular flues to chimney.

West end of nave has stepped 4 light lancet window with sill band clasped between stepped buttresses, and surmounted by lancet vent at apex; impost and sill band.

Tripartite stepped lancets to E end, with mullioned 2 light windows

incorporated under low transom. Lancet vent at apex. Two tall lancets to S wall of chancel.

Interior

Lofty interior with 7-bay timber arcade; angle-braced posts on high stone bases. Second tier of similar arcading in blind clerestory, which houses extremely rare ventilation system comprising arched wooden shutters operated by rope and pulley system. Rendered panels between the shutters. Trefoiled profile to boarded wagon roof with King strut tie beams in upper tier.

Contemporary fittings include fine pulpit in banded granite, low stone chancel screen with iron traceried rail, and traceried reredos, its panels divided by tall finials. Bench pews are also contemporary.

Stained glass window in south aisle, Celtic Studios, 1970; E window by Heaton, Butler and Baine, 1911.

Reasons for Listing

Listed at grade II* as a fine, early example of the work of Coates Carter, and notable particularly for the quality of its interior, with its distinctive timber arcade and roof structure, incorporating extremely unusual timber ventilation shutters. The church also retains many original fittings.

The list description above sets out details of the special architectural and historic importance of the church building.

As indicated previously the listing description does not set out any details in respect of the hall.

Notwithstanding this the design principles are set out as follows

- Minimise visual effect
- Promote the sustainable use of the building
- Preserve the historic fabric of the building.

The proposed development will involve the conversion of the building into a residential dwelling. As shown in **Figure 1** below

Figure 1



A detailed schedule of work is set out in paragraph 4.1.1 of the HIA and submitted plans.

The proposed works are required in order to provide a dwelling with adequate standards of amenity together with repairs which are both structural and cosmetic

The provision/location of doors and windows were chosen to:

- Respect the original layout of the building and thereby minimises any visual effect.
- Provide adequate standard of amenity for future occupiers and promote the safe and sustainable use of the building.
- In order to improve the ascetic quality of the building and prevent further deterioration to its fabric.

4. Appearance

The hall, the subject of this application, is an unattractive building with no interesting or valuable architectural quality.

Nevertheless, the design principles seek to minimize and change. As such the proposed works will therefore be unsighted from the general vicinity. It is submitted that they will improve, restore and preserve the appearance of the building

5. Environmental Sustainability

PPW states

3.7 Developments should seek to maximise energy efficiency and the efficient use of other resources (including land), maximise sustainable movement, minimise the use of non-renewable resources, encourage decarbonisation and prevent the generation of waste and pollution.

Advice on achieving the Welsh Governments aspiration set out above are contained with *Practical Guidance - Planning for Sustainable Buildings July2014*⁵

The proposed internal layout has been design so as to maximize solar gain.

⁵ <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/desh/publications/140820practice-guidance-planning-for-sustainable-buildings-en.pdf>

Low energy lighting will be used throughout the building.

The proposal will meet all current insulation standards

Materials, where possible, will be used from sustainable sources

6. Layout

The proposed external layout will remain unchanged. Internal changes are set out in the supporting plans and will have no overall effect on the external appearance.

7. Scale

The development will not result in an increase in the scale of the building.

8. Access

Guidance within Development Management Manual - Revision 2 May 2017 states that when deal with access a DAS should address

The policy or approach to access, including:

- i. what alternative means of access have been considered
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How the policy or approach adopted as to access takes account of:

- i. the special architectural or historic importance of the building
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iii. and the building's setting

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Policy BE 1 (criteria 10) of the LDP promotes accessible development

10. The layout and design of the development achieves inclusive design by ensuring barrier free environments, allowing access by all and making full provision for people with disabilities.

The hall is currently accessed via a front and side rear door.

During the design iteration alternative means of access were considered. Other alternatives were limited due to changes in level at the sides, internal configuration and the proximity of the building to adjacent boundaries.

Access to the hall is currently via a front and rear side access. The use of the existing accesses, corridor and opening would therefore respect the physical features/layout within the building in addition to minimizing additional external work

As such the retaining the existing access was considered the most practical both in design and effect on the fabric of the building.