

Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA)

Job Number: 2377

**Planning and Listed Building Consent, Gorphwysfa
Chapel, Skewen.**

Clients: Rhian Jones & Daniel Kilbride.



Gorphwysfa Chapel, Skewen

ADDITIONAL 01

Index:

The HIA should set put your opinions and the reasons for your preferred approach	3
The Minimal Impact of the proposals and the client's aspirations	4 & 5
The Clients Aproach	6
Proposed service Drawings of the Schoolhouse	
Proposed Ground Floor Plan	7
Proposed First Floor Plan	8

The HIA should set out a summary of your options and the reasons for your preferred approach, cross-referenced with submitted drawings/specifications that are sufficiently detailed for Listed Building Consent purposes.

The Built Environment

The Heritage Impact study shows a chapel and schoolhouse in a good state of preservation with outstanding original features in the body of the chapel. A pipe organ in working condition, a ventilation system, a cast iron balustrade surrounding all four sides of the upper level, a substantial seditious and pulpit with stained glass between the chapel and porch area. There are a number of original pews.

To the outside there is a large lawn with exterior steps to the double doors and a retaining wall to the street surmounted by an original cast iron railing with elaborate wrought iron gates and gateposts. The exterior appearance is original, with the original doors to the front and two courses of arched windows made of Baltic pine with many original window panes. The schoolhouse once contained a series of sliding partitions, now gone, a stage is present that shows signs of disrepair. There is a cellar containing two, derelict cast iron boilers.

The first floor is reached by a concrete staircase and contains seven rooms, two of which may once have been lavatory/washrooms. The middle room upstairs contains the old manual bellows and pump system for the organ, now driven by an external electrical fan in a small redbrick outhouse.

The exterior also contains two toilets separated by a wall, the remains of a redbrick urinal, an unfinished cinderblock construction and a redbrick shed with a flat, concrete roof which contains a large, rusting steel oil tank. There is also a large (3 inch) rusted pipe connecting the tank to the main road.

Minimal Impact of the proposal and the client's aspirations

The Heritage Impact to this application is minimal. CADW's inspector Jonathan Green said that there is nothing of interest in the school house and that their concerns lie with the external appearance of the building, the balustrade, sedd fawr, pulpit and organ.

In this application there are no external or internal alterations to the main body of the chapel, its external appearance or curtilage other than installing appropriate sewage systems, and the recommended installation of bat boxes and nesting boxes on the east side above the bottom row of windows (detailed in the report from Kuro Ecological Associates Ltd) and a mow management system for the front lawn and a similar recommendation not to cut the hedges during the nesting season.

For residential use the client will need the following:

- Internal toilet
- Internal washroom/bathroom
- Kitchen and food storage fit-for-use
- Heating systems

In order to achieve this, they have consulted alongside NPT planning, James Neale building regulations specialists, SABA engineering, Limitless Energy Ltd, Live Link Electrical, Dafydd Gimlett, specialist heritage building joiner, Tom Griffiths, specialist heritage building stonemason, Welsh Water and Howard Griffiths, builder.

They are advised that the electricity supply (a modern 80 AMP, 2 phase supply) is sufficient but the wiring and sockets need repurposing and replacing and renewing the circuit breakers in the existing distribution boards.

Welsh Water advise that there is a clean supply entering from the north west but that new plumbing will need to be laid along the north side of the building internally in order to facilitate upgrading the kitchen and installing upstairs bathrooms and toilets.

There is no issue unless sprinklers need to be installed in which case a fresh supply will need to be installed with 32 mm pipe to cope with the flow if the sprinklers are fired.

They have confirmed the location of a foul outlet on the east side of the building and that water entering the premises from their pipes comes as part of an un-metered joint supply on the west side from Park Street.

They've also confirmed that existing water pipes throughout the building are no longer used.

SABA engineering recommended installing a gas combi boiler system, however there is no gas supply to the building. Installing a new supply is prohibitively expensive and would in any case necessitate heating tens of metres of water to reach other parts of the building and so the clients have decided that the most appropriate water heating systems should be electrical in-line water heaters where hot water is required.

Limitless Energy Limited have advised on green systems and insulation. They explored ground source and air source heating systems. There is insufficient land to install a ground source heating system and installing an air source system would involve removing the existing external red brick building on the east of the building to clear enough space for air flow. They also intimated that any air source unit would cost over £20,000 to install and even then, could not be guaranteed to do more than keep the ambient temperature to 16 degrees centigrade. Their recommendation is to look at installing solar panels on the south facing elements of the roof at a later date once the electrical requirements of the building are settled. This is not included in this application.

They also recommended repairs to the existing windows to cut out heat loss from draughts. This will involve stripping each window in turn, replacing rotten or missing beading and replacing the existing panes or sourcing similar ones, fresh putty, wood treatments and re-painting with heavy duty external gloss paint. They recommended lagging the loft space.

Live Link electrical recommended the installation of a series of double sockets in each room and in the downstairs large room of the schoolhouse using the existing wiring that had previously been used for the Dimplex radiator system that was removed before purchase. They also recommended a number of replacement light switches which had corroded over time.

Our heritage specialists recommended replacing any external cement pointing and replacing with lime mortar as the concrete mortar contributes to ongoing lamination in the stonework.

James Neale advised that we would need to install an alarm system to detect fire and fumes and the later installation of escape ladders from two of the upstairs windows along with consulting with CADW regarding fire doors between the schoolhouse and the chapel.

He was satisfied that there are three separate exits. He also advised that whether or not we needed to insulate the building internally was a matter for Neath Port Talbot and that they would advise. The client's heritage specialists advise that the existing paint in the schoolhouse is a latex compound which does not allow the walls to breathe and should be removed before any insulation system is considered.

The heating system remains undecided, although the firm recommendation from Limitless Energy is to use a radiant panel system suspended over the living areas of the large downstairs room. All consultants declare that the existing radiator system is unusable. It was designed for different operating pressures, has been unused for many years and is tied to a redundant boiler system that seems to operate on burning oil.

The ecologists report says that no proposed activity will have any effect upon protected species and recommends that we inspect window recesses before repairing the windows and that no work to the soffits be undertaken without an ecologist inspecting them.

The client's Approach

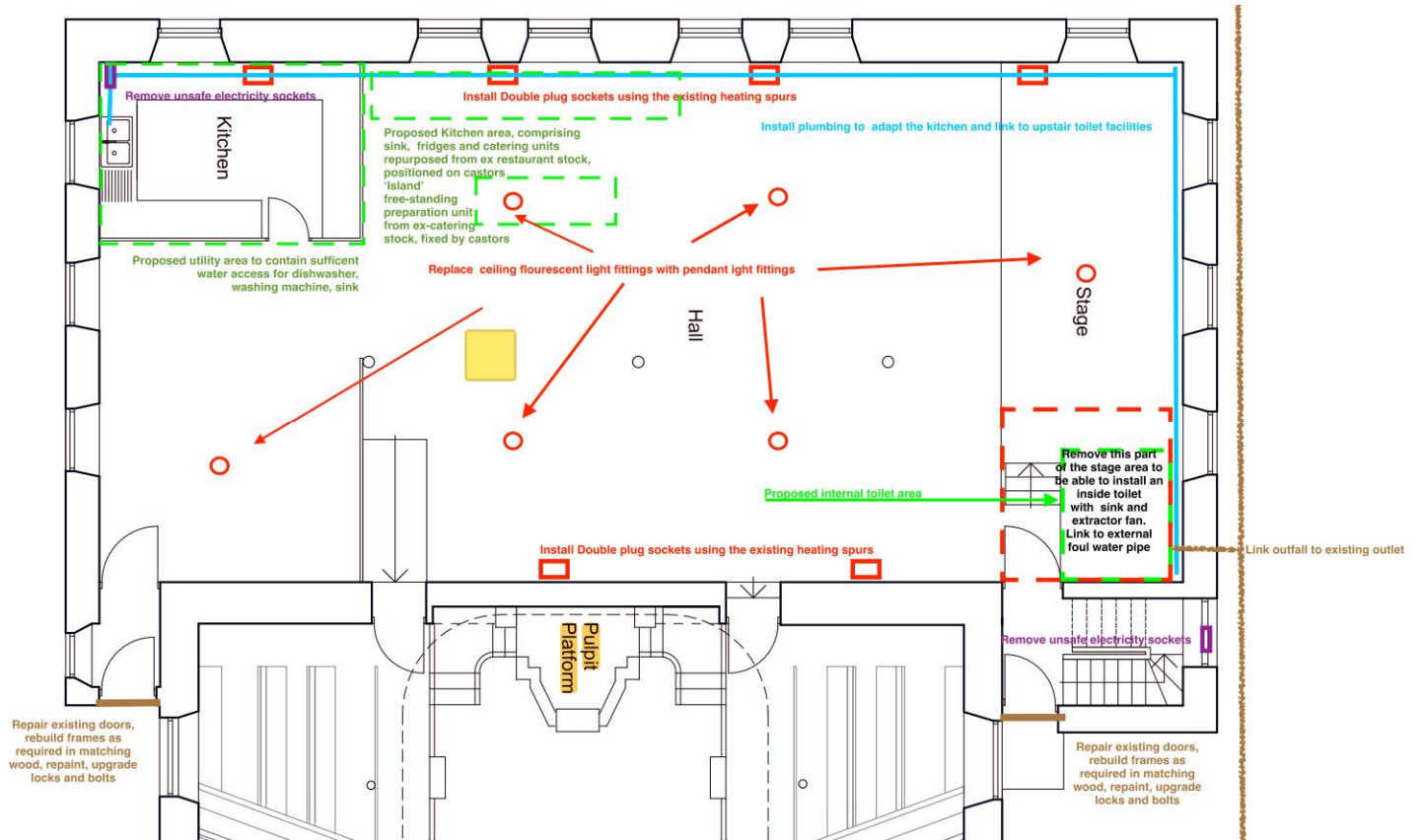
The approach recommended to our client is to acknowledge their own deep affection and respect for the site and to propose the minimum changes possible to bring the schoolhouse into a space suitable for residential use while clearly stating that there are no proposed alterations to the chapel space until there is a management plan, appropriate body and sufficient funds to open up the chapel space for any proposed community use.

We recommend that the clients do the least possible work to the schoolhouse - electrical and water safety, plus the internal construction of washing and toilet facilities - and the smallest number of repairs to the fittings to prevent rot and decay.

The schedule of repairs described will, if anything, improve the external appearance of the building.



Proposed Ground Floor Plan



Proposed First Floor Plan

