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Client: Listed Building Consent
Project: Bethel Chapel, Pontrydyfen
Date: October 2024
Report: Heritage Impact
Assessment

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Client: Listed Building Consent		35 percent
Project: Bethel Chapel, Pontrydyfen		
Title: Heritage Impact Assessment		
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1. OBJECTIVE

- 1.1** In 2025, there will be global interest in world famous actor Richard Burton's centenary. Neath Port Talbot Council have commissioned 35percent Ltd to update the Richard Burton Trails in Pontrhydyfen and Port Talbot by 31st December 2024. As part of the trail, we are hoping to install a small interpretation panel on the railings of Bethel Chapel explaining that Richard Burton's memorial took place here in 1984. This is an important part of the Richard Burton story and his relationship with Pontrhydyfen.

2. UNDERSTANDING SIGNIFICANCE

- 2.1** The Cadw entry states that Bethel Chapel is a Grade II listed building with the following description (see Appendix I for location map and full report):

History

- 2.2** Dated 1903 and replacing an earlier chapel of 1850. (A boundary wall appears to incorporate remains of the earlier chapel.) The style is classical, with parapet out of proportion to the main elevation. A memorial service was held here for Richard Burton in 1984.

Exterior

- 2.3** Three-bay 2-storey end-entry facade constructed of grey coursed rock-faced stone with prominent red sandstone dressings. The entrance facade has an over-high square-headed attic and is divided into 3 bays by red sandstone pilasters which rise off a sill band forming the coping to a high 2-tier plinth. Moulded string course between tiers above which are 6 foundation stones. The lower tier is battered. The pilasters have moulded bases and very large Corinthian capitals which support a lintel, above which is a wide moulded band. The outer pilasters rise to the top of the attic frieze which has a moulded red sandstone coping. In the centre of the frieze is a red sandstone tablet with arched head reading 'Bethel'. The inscription states that the chapel was built in 1850 and rebuilt in 1903. Between the central pilasters is a heavily moulded round-headed doorway, the jambs partly obscured by the pilasters. The arch rises off impostes with foliage in high relief. It contains double panelled wooden doors and an overlight with radial glazing, set back. The windows are in a similar style; narrow moulded arches rise off square jambs with moulded bases and foliate impostes. One window to each bay and storey, a smaller window above the door. Each has 2 lights, those to the lower storey with a horizontal glazing bar, and overlights with radial glazing. The sides and rear are of rubble stone with large quoins under a pitched slate roof with boarded eaves. Lean-to to rear. Two-storey 4-window side walls. Each window has 4 panes and an overlight in a red brick surround with segmental head. The lintel of the upper R window is replaced in concrete. The rear lean-to has a 6-over-6-pane sash window to the S side and 2 similar windows to the rear, one partially boarded over. To the L of the lean-to is a small corrugated tin porch containing a boarded door. Side stack to N side and yellow brick window surrounds.

Interior

- 2.4** Vestibule with straight stair to each side leading to gallery. Two panelled doors lead into the chapel with a window between. Three-sided U-shaped gallery supported on fluted cast iron columns with oversized foliate capitals. Bellied gallery front of open ironwork on a wooden plinth supported on brackets with horizontal bands. The ironwork consists of scrollwork with Tudor flowers and a lattice frieze along the base. Five rows of pews to gallery. Three banks of planked pews below with curved bench ends; planked wainscot. To the front is a blind moulded arch; the jambs have recessed panels lined with egg and

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dart moulding and foliate bosses. Capitals with dentils, and a hollow-moulded round arch with egg and dart and foliate friezes, and a scrolled keystone with foliate decoration. Wooden ceiling with diagonal planking and 2 decorated plaster ceiling roses. In front is a wide pulpit, the central section advanced, with a straight ironwork screen above wooden panelling. The open ironwork is in the same style as the gallery. Around the pulpit is the set fawr with thin widely-spaced fluted balusters and a moulded hand rail. Turned balusters to angles with finials. Two panelled doors flanking the pulpit lead to the vestry which is open to the roof with a dado and wainscot panelling.

Reason for designation

- 2.5 Listed for its unusual classical style and fine interior. The over-large features, such as the capitals, impart special character to the building.
- 2.6 The entry in Coflein states:

'Bethel Baptist Chapel was originally built in 1850, but rebuilding/extensive modifications took place in 1903. The present building is built in a Classical style, with pilasters decorated with Corinthian capitals and round-headed windows dressed with matching columns and containing 4-paned windows with radiating glazing bars in the arched section over. Extending straight up from the main facade is a false front, concealing the gable roof behind it, and carrying a datestone with the inscription 'CAPEL Y BEDYDDWYR AEILADWYD 1850 AIL ADEILADWYD 1903'.'
- 2.7 We are not proposing to impact the exterior or interior of the building. We are hoping to attach an interpretation panel to the railings at the entrance.

3. IDENTIFYING PROPOSED CHANGES

- 3.1 We have chosen to apply the interpretation panel to the railings to avoid attaching to the exterior or interior of the chapel building.
- 3.2 The interpretation panel would be 30cm high by 40cm wide and 1cm in depth.
- 3.3 The location of the railings in What3words is: condensed.pounces.spare. The panel would span across 4 railings.

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Photograph 1 – Bethel Chapel and its railings



Photograph 2 – Close up of the railings



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- 3.4 To fix the interpretation panel to the railings we are proposing a metal channel & clip that bolts on from the back. It would be powder coated to ensure the colour matched the railings

Photograph 3 – Proposed fixing method



Photograph 4 – Back view of proposed fixing method



- 3.5 The design of the interpretation board we are proposing to install is set out below:



Credited film: Cofio Richard yng Nghapel Bethel (2004) © trigolyn lleol.
Photo credit: Richard's memorial at Bethel Chapel (2004) © local resident.

Cofio Richard Remembering Richard

Yn 1984, ymgasglodd cannoedd o alarwyr, gan gynnwys pobl leol, cefnogwyr, a rhai o sêr mwya'r byd, yma i ffarwelio â Richard Burton.

In 1984, hundreds of mourners, including locals, fans and A-list stars, gathered here to bid farewell to Richard Burton.

Darganfyddwch fwy
Discover more





Calon Ddramatig Cymru
THE DRAMATIC HEART OF WALES

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Wedi ei ariannu gan
Llywodraeth y DU

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4. ASSESSING THE IMPACTS

- 4.1 We believe our proposal will not have any negative impacts on the historic asset as there will be no loss or damage to the historic structure of Bethel Chapel, and it will not compromise its historical design principles.
- 4.2 We believe the addition of an interpretation panel will be a positive benefit as it will be easier for the local community and visitors to appreciate that the building was used for an important cultural and historic event. We have carefully considered the scale of the panel and the materials used to ensure compatibility with the location and ensure no damage occurs to the existing railings. Our design has been approved by the local community representative, The Burton Bont Festival group and the Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council representatives, Karleigh Davies Destination and Development Coordinator and Esta Lewis Project Development Officer - Heritage, Culture, Tourism and Events Fund.

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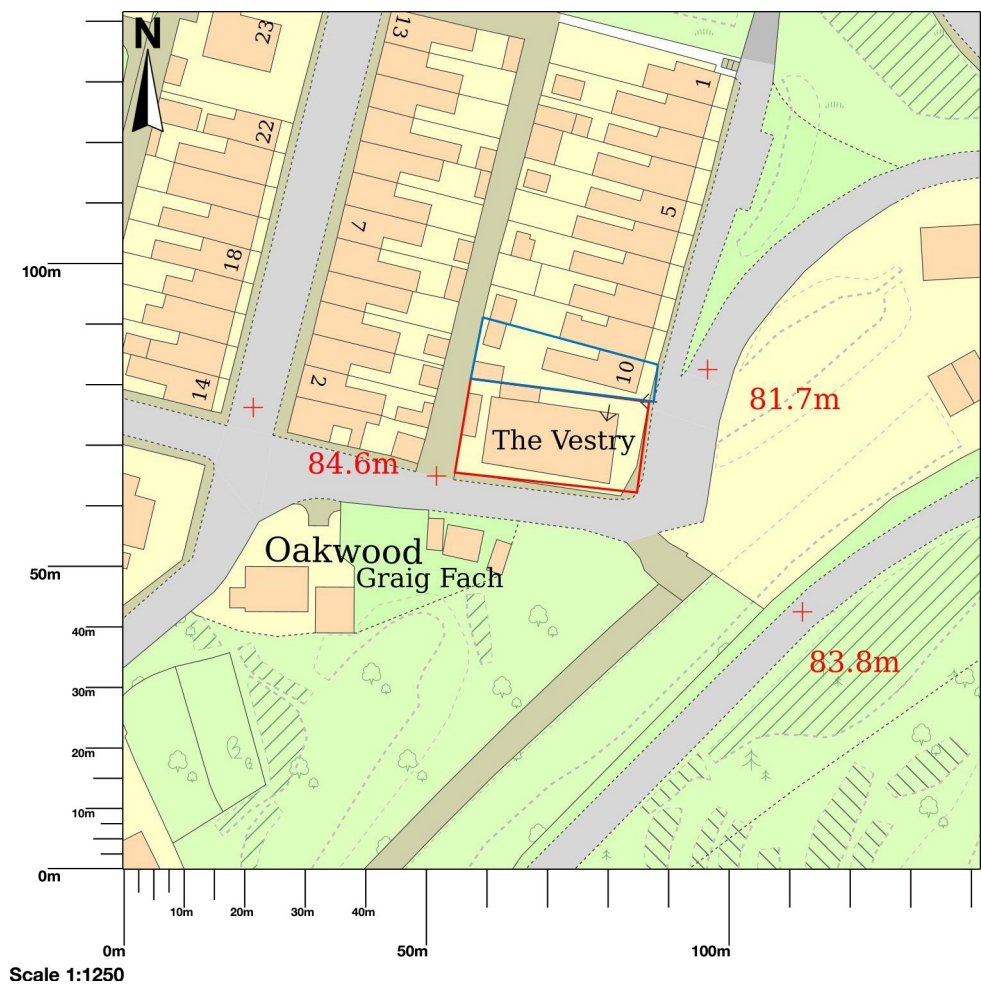
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APPENDIX I. Location map and CADW Listed Building Full Report

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The Vestry, Bethel Chapel, Aqueduct Terrace, Pontrhydyfen, Port Talbot, SA12 9SA



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Full Report for Listed Buildings



The list description is not intended to be a complete inventory of what is listed: it is principally intended to aid identification. By law, the definition of a listed building includes the entire building (i) and any structure or object that is fixed to the said building and ancillary to it and (ii) any other structure or object that forms part of the land and has done so since before 1 July 1948, and was within the curtilage of the building, and ancillary to it, on the date on which said building was first included in the list, or on 1 January 1969, whichever was later.

Summary Description

Reference Number	Building Number	Grade	Status	Date of Designation	Date of Amendment
23021		II	Designated	21/03/2000	21/03/2000
Name of Property		Address			
Bethel Chapel					

Location

Unitary Authority	Community	Town	Locality	Easting	Northing
Neath Port Talbot	Cwmavon	Port Talbot	Pontrhydyfen	279523	193996
Street Side	Location				
W	The chapel faces E at the corner of Aqueduct Terrace. Set within a rubble stone enclosure wall with square gate piers to entrance, iron gates and flanking railings.				

Description

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Broad Class

Religious, Ritual and Funerary

Period

History

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Exterior

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Reason for designation

Listed for its unusual classical style and fine interior. The over-large features, such as the capitals, impart special character to the building.

Cadw : Full Report for Listed Buildings

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