

Grade II Ebenezer Chapel, Forecourt Walls, Railings, Gates and Aberavon Bridge

Archaeological Assessment

May 2024

A report for Morgan Sindall

GGAT report no. 2024/017



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Document Control

Version	Author	Illustrations	Peer Review	Approval Date
001	JS	Client	MT	03/05/2024

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Summary statement

The Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust, (Archaeological Services) has undertaken an archaeological assessment in advance of proposed alterations related to the change of use to the Princess Royal Theatre adjacent to the Grade II listed Ebenezer Chapel (14174), its grade II forecourt walls, railings and gates (22805) and the Grade II Aberavon Bridge (14173/22804).*

The report sets out the historic background, context, proposed restoration and descriptions of the heritage asset affected by the proposed works.

The proposals may temporarily restrict the current public access during works but not impede any existing sightlines nor have any effect on the setting of the Listed Buildings. This is largely due to the impact that the current modern developments surrounding the Listed Buildings have already had on their settings. There is no direct impact to Ebenezer Chapel, attached forecourt walls, railings and gates nor to the bridge envisaged.

Overall, the proposed works are focused solely on The Princess Royal Theatre and its surrounding area, and are largely sympathetic to the existing structure. It is considered that with the proposed changes the renovation proposals will equate to a "Negligible" outcome for the setting of the Listed Buildings. Indeed the outcome for the long term may be considered to be beneficial with the increased green and open space.

This study has been undertaken to the professional standards of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.

Authorship and acknowledgements

The project has been managed by Martin Tuck MCIfA (Project Manager). The report was prepared by Joel Sullivan BSc MSc of GGAT Archaeological Services, Isaac Derbyshire BSc carried out the site visit and photographic survey. Between the time of commission and the writing of this report, the four Welsh Trusts have merged into the Trust for Welsh Archaeology (HENEb) (henceforth TWA (HENEb)).

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Abbreviations

GGAT:	Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust
CRAPW:	Central Register of Air Photography for Wales
HER:	Historic Environment Record (curated by GGAT HER)
LB:	Listed Building reference number (e.g. LB 14084)
NGR:	National Grid Reference
NMR:	National Monuments Record (curated by RCAHMW)
NPRN:	National Primary Record Number
OS:	Ordnance Survey
PRN:	Primary Record Number
RCAHMW:	Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales
TWA (HENEb):	Trust for Welsh Archaeology (HENEb)

1. Introduction

Morgan Sindall are preparing a planning application for a change of use and alterations to the elevations at Princess Royal Theatre, Port Talbot (hereafter referred to as the 'Site'). The Ebenezer Chapel (14174) a Grade II* listed building, the Grade II listed Forecourt Walls, Railings and Gates to Ebenezer Chapel (22805) and Grade II listed Aberavon Bridge (14173 / 22804) are located approximately just southwest of the theatre within the same area of landscaping and car parking.

The Archaeological Services Department of the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust (GGAT Projects, now TWA (HENEb)) has been commissioned by Morgan Sindall to carry out an archaeological assessment to inform the planning application when it is taken forward.

The objective of this assessment is to: a) inform the planning application by determining, as far as is reasonably possible from existing records, the nature, extent and significance of the historic environment within the Site and its environs; and b) establish the impact of the proposed development on the listed assets.

1.1 Site location

The Princess Royal Theatre is a four storey, 'C' shaped theatre, offering many different events and functions, with a 798 capacity. Currently, the theatre is clad in yellow brick with a slate mansard roof.

The north of site is bounded by the B4286 beyond which is the M4, raised for this part of its route, then steeply sloping open ground. To the south east the site's car park abuts the River Afan, from which it is separated by a low wall and a change in ground level. To the south is the listed Ebenezer Chapel and Aberavon Bridge, linking the shopping centre to the supermarket across the river. To the south west of site, across grassed areas and a pedestrian footpath is the Aberavon Shopping Centre.

1.2 Proposed works

As part of larger scale works granted across Port Talbot under the levelling up grant, proposed remodelling to the Princess Royal Theatre and its immediate surroundings are planned, and include (**Figure 1**);

Princess Royal Theatre

Ground Floor

- An increased area of the existing foyer with a new glazed entrance
- A new central bar
- A new public lift location
- New orchestra lift
- New canopy
- New black flats to create a narrower Proscenium
- New cross over corridor on the northeast side

- Amended platform lift for disable access
- Existing 'Kitchen' to be converted to dressing rooms
- Sliding partitions to create conference rooms

First Floor

- Refurbished changing room
- Refurbished bar and lounge
- New public lift

Second Floor

- Larger control room

Immediate Surrounds

Within the site boundaries the following are proposed to undergo refurbishment or installation;

- Fountain
- New amphitheatre steps
- New block paving
- Bunds to the southwest of the fountain
- Planting beds in the main square and in the existing council members and church carpark
- Outdoor seating
- Associated landscaping

There are no planned direct impacts to any of the Listed Buildings.

2. Legislation and Planning Guidance

This section sets out legislation and planning policy governing the conservation and management of the historic environment that is of relevance to this application.

2.1 Legislation

2.1.1 Historic Environment (Wales) Act

The Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016 is the first legislation enacted specifically for the Welsh historic environment. The legislation was framed with three main aims: to give more effective protection to Wales' scheduled monuments and listed buildings; to enhance existing mechanisms for the sustainable management of the historic environment; and to introduce greater transparency and accountability into decisions taken on the historic environment.

Whilst providing a number of new provisions to existing legislation, the act does not specifically affect the planning process or the way in which archaeology and heritage matters are addressed within it.

2.1.2 Scheduled Monuments

Scheduled monuments are defined and protected by the 1979 Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act. This legislation is concerned with the physical protection of scheduled monuments; their setting is addressed in more recent policy and guidance (see below).

2.1.3 Listed Buildings

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is the primary legislative instrument addressing the treatment of listed buildings and conservation areas through the planning process in Wales.

Section 66(1) of the 1990 Act concerns listed buildings and states that:

... in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State, shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

The 'special regard' duty of the 1990 Act has been tested in the Court of Appeal and confirmed to require that 'considerable importance and weight' should be afforded by the decision maker to the desirability of preserving a listed building along with its setting. The relevant judgement is referenced as *Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Ltd v East Northants DC, English Heritage and National Trust* (2014) EWCA Civ 137. However, it must be recognised that Section 66(1) of the 1990 Act does not identify that the local authority or the Secretary of State must preserve a listed building or its setting; neither does it in any way indicate that a development which does not preserve them is unacceptable or should therefore be refused. This point is made very

clearly in Paragraph 54 of the judgement regarding *Forest of Dean DC v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government* (2013), which identifies that:

... Section 66 (1) did not oblige the inspector to reject the proposal because he found it would cause some harm to the setting of the listed buildings. The duty is directed to 'the desirability of preserving' the setting of listed buildings. One sees there the basic purpose of the 'special regard' duty. It does not rule out acceptable change. It gives the decision-maker an extra task to perform, which is to judge whether the change proposed is acceptable. But it does not prescribe the outcome. It does not dictate the refusal of planning permission if the proposed development is found likely to alter or even to harm the setting of a listed building.

In other words, it is up to the decision maker (such as a local authority) to assess whether the proposal which is before them would result in 'acceptable change'.

2.2 National planning policy

2.2.1 Future Wales: The National Plan 2040

The Welsh Government's *Future Wales: The National Plan 2040* states in the foreword from the Minister for Housing and Local Government that it forms a 'framework for planning the change and development our country will need over the next two decades'.

In terms of the Welsh Government's objectives, Number 6 of 'Future Wales Outcomes' on Page 55 states that:

Development plans will have a forward thinking, positive attitude towards enabling economic development, investment and innovation. Increased prosperity and productivity will be pursued across all parts of Wales, building on current activity and promoting a culture of innovation, social partnership, entrepreneurialism and skills-development in sustainable industries and sectors. The culture, heritage and environment of Wales will play a positive, modern role in the economy by attracting the interest and expenditure of tourists and providing a distinctive and trusted brand for Welsh businesses.

2.2.2 Planning Policy Wales

National planning guidance, concerning the treatment of the historic environment across Wales, is detailed in *Planning Policy Wales* Edition 11 (24 February 2021), Section 6.1 of Chapter 6, *Distinctive and Natural Places of Planning*

Paragraph 6.1.2 identifies the historic environment as comprising individual historic features, such as archaeological sites, historic buildings and historic parks, gardens, townscapes and landscapes, collectively known as 'historic assets'. Paragraph 6.1.6 outlines the Welsh Government's objectives for the historic environment. These seek to:

"... conserve archaeological remains, both for their own sake and for their role in education, leisure and the economy' and 'safeguard the character of historic buildings and manage change so that their special architectural and historic interest is preserved."

Paragraph 6.1.7 states that:

"It is important that the planning system looks to protect, conserve and enhance the significance of historic assets. This will include consideration of the setting of an historic asset which might extend beyond its curtilage. Any change that impacts on an historic asset or its setting should be managed in a sensitive and sustainable way."

With regard to decision making, it is stated that: 'Any decisions made through the planning system must fully consider the impact on the historic environment and on the significance and heritage values of individual historic assets and their contribution to the character of place'.

In respect of listed buildings, para. 6.1.10 states that:

"... there should be a general presumption in favour of the preservation of a listed building and its setting, which might extend beyond its curtilage' ... 'For any development proposal affecting a listed building or its setting, the primary material consideration is the statutory requirement to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building, or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses ... The aim should be to find the best way to protect and enhance the special qualities of listed buildings, retaining them in sustainable use"

In respect of conservation areas, para. 6.1.14 states that: 'There should be a general presumption in favour of the preservation or enhancement of the character or appearance of conservation areas or their settings'.

Paragraphs 6.1.15 and 6.1.16 state that:

"There will be a strong presumption against the granting of planning permission for development, including advertisements, which damage the character and appearance of a conservation area or its setting to an unacceptable level. In exceptional cases the presumption may be overridden in favour of development deemed desirable on the grounds of some other public interest' ... Preservation or enhancement of a conservation area can be achieved by a development which either makes a positive contribution to an area's character or appearance, or leaves them unharmed."

Planning Policy Wales does not state that any damage to the character and appearance of a conservation area would result in the refusal of planning permission. It is only damage that is of an 'unacceptable level' which would result in a strong presumption against the granting of planning permission. The required judgement is concerned with what constitutes an 'unacceptable' level of harm – not whether there is any harm at all.

2.2.3 Technical Advice Note 24 (TAN 24)

Additional heritage guidance in Wales is set out in Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment. TAN 24 provides guidance on how the planning system considers the historic environment during development plan preparation and decision making on planning applications.

TAN 24 defines an 'historic asset' as:

"An identifiable component of the historic environment. It may consist or be a combination of an archaeological site, a historic building or area, historic park and garden or a parcel of historic landscape. Nationally important historic assets will normally be designated. "

Effects through changes within the settings of historic assets are covered in TAN 24 at Paragraphs 1.23 to 1.29. Paragraph 1.25 defines the setting of an historic asset as comprising:

"... the surroundings in which it is understood, experienced, and appreciated embracing present and past relationships to the surrounding landscape. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral. Setting is not a historic asset in its own right but has value derived from how different elements may contribute to the significance of a historic asset."

Paragraph 1.26 stipulates that:

"It is for the applicant to provide the local planning authority with sufficient information to allow the assessment of their proposals in respect of Scheduled Monuments, listed buildings, conservation areas, registered historic parks and gardens, World Heritage Sites, or other sites of national importance and their settings."

Paragraph 1.29 goes on to state that:

"The local planning authority will need to make its own assessment of the impact within the setting of a historic asset, having considered the responses received from consultees as part of this process. A judgement has to be made by the consenting authority, on a case-by-case basis, over whether a proposed development may be damaging to the setting of the historic asset, or may enhance or have a neutral impact on the setting by the removal of existing inappropriate development or land use."

2.3 Local planning policy

2.3.1 Neath and Port Talbot Local Development Plan (LDP) 2011-2026

Local planning policy is contained in the Local Development Plan (LDP), adopted January 2016. Chapter 5.5 of the LDP outlines policies concerned with the treatment of the Historic and Cultural Environment. Two key policies are of relevance to the current assessment: BE1 and BE2.

Policy BE 1 Design:

All development proposals will be expected to demonstrate high quality design which fully takes into account the natural, historic and built environmental context and contributes to the creation of attractive, sustainable places. Proposals will only be permitted where all of the following criteria, where relevant, are satisfied:

1. It complements and enhances the character and appearance of the site, building or area in terms of siting, appearance, scale, height, massing and elevation treatment;
2. It respects the context of the site and its place within the local landscape, including its impact on the important arterial gateways into the County Borough, its effects on townscape and the local historic and cultural heritage and it takes account of the site topography and prominent skylines or ridges;
3. It utilises materials appropriate to its surroundings and incorporates hard and soft landscaping and screening where appropriate;
4. It would not have a significant adverse impact on highway safety, the amenity of occupiers of adjacent land or the community;
5. Important local features (including buildings, amenity areas, green spaces and green infrastructure, biodiversity and ecological connectivity) are retained and enhanced as far as possible;
6. It achieves and creates attractive, safe places and public spaces, taking account of 'Secured by Design' principles (including where appropriate natural surveillance, visibility, well lit environments and areas of public movement);
7. It plays a full role in achieving and enhancing an integrated transport and communications network promoting the interests of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport and ensures linkages with the existing surrounding community;
8. It uses resources, including land and energy, as efficiently as possible through: (a) Making the best and most efficient use of the land available through being of appropriate density taking into account the character and appearance of the area, normally a minimum of 35 dwellings per hectare in the Coastal Corridor Strategy Area or a minimum of 30 dwellings per hectare in the Valleys Strategy Area; (b) The layout and form of the development does not preclude the reasonable use of other adjacent land; (c) Developing brownfield land in preference to greenfield land where possible; (d) Minimising building exposure while maximising solar gain.
9. Its drainage systems are designed to limit surface water run-of and flood risk and prevent pollution;
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.

Policy BE 2 Buildings of Local Importance

Development proposals that would affect buildings that are of local historic, architectural or cultural importance will only be permitted where:

1.
They conserve and where appropriate enhance the building and its setting;
- or 2.

It is demonstrated that the development could not reasonably be accommodated without affecting or replacing the building and the reasons for the development outweigh the heritage importance of the site.

3. Methodology

3.1 Standards and Guidance

This assessment draws on the following - Cadw Conservation Principles (2011), Heritage Impact Assessment (2017) and Setting of Historic Assets in Wales (2017).

3.2 Assessment of significance

Where relevant, the assessment of significance for historic assets makes reference to the four 'heritage values' which are defined by Cadw's Conservation Principles (2011). These comprise:

- The asset's **evidential value**, which is defined as those elements of the historic asset that can provide evidence about past human activity, including its physical remains or historic fabric;
- The asset's **historical value**, which is defined as those elements of an asset which might illustrate a particular aspect of past life or might be associated with a notable family, person, event or movement;
- The asset's **aesthetic value**, which is defined as deriving from the way in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from the historic asset;
- The asset's **communal value**, which is defined as deriving from the meanings that a historic asset has for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.

3.3 Setting of heritage assets

When assessing the impact of proposals on historic assets, it is important to ascertain whether change within their setting would lead to a loss of significance. Guidance for the assessment of potential effects of this nature is given in Cadw's Setting of Historic Assets in Wales (2017).

The guidance states that setting 'includes the surroundings in which it is understood, experienced and appreciated, embracing present and past relationships to the surrounding landscape'. 'Setting' is not a heritage asset and cannot itself be harmed. The guidance states that the importance of setting 'lies in what it contributes to the significance of a historic asset'. Consequently, when assessing the impact of development proposals on heritage assets, it is not a question of whether their setting would be affected, but rather a question of whether change within the asset's setting would lead to a loss of significance.

Therefore, where the objective is to determine the potential for development to have an effect on heritage assets beyond the boundary of a development site, it is necessary to first define the significance of the asset in question, and the contribution made to that significance by its setting, in order to establish whether there would be a loss, and therefore harm.

The guidance identifies that change within a heritage asset's setting need not necessarily cause 'harm' and that it can be positive or neutral.

Cadw guidance (2017) sets out a four-stage approach to the identification and assessment of setting effects; i.e.:

- Stage 1: Identify the historic assets which might be affected;
- Stage 2: Define and analyse the setting, to understand how it contributes to the asset's heritage significance;
- Stage 3: Evaluate the potential impact of development;
- Stage 4: Consider options to mitigate or improve that potential impact.

Therefore, the key issue to be determined is whether, and to what extent, the proposed development would affect the contribution that setting makes to the heritage significance of each asset under consideration, as per Stages 2 and 3 of the Cadw guidance.

These discussions will inform Stage 4 of the Cadw process – i.e. what embedded design mitigation would be appropriate for the preservation or improvement of the setting of historic assets.

4. Assessment

4.1 Stage 1

Assets scoped into the assessment

The following three historic assets have been identified as having the potential for their setting to be altered:

- Ebenezer Chapel (14174) a Grade II* listed building.
- Forecourt Walls, Railings and Gates to Ebenezer Chapel (22805) Grade II listed.
- Aberavon Bridge (14173/22804¹) Grade II listed.

There are no other known assets to be considered.

4.2 Stage 2

Description of asset (Stage 2)

4.2.1 Ebenezer Chapel (14174) a Grade II* listed building.

The following is taken from the Cadw 2022 Full Report for Listed Buildings;

The Ebenezer chapel is described as follows in the summary description of listed buildings (Cadw):

“Two-storey gable-end facade with narrow flanking staircase bays. The front elevation is of snecked rock-faced stone, the side walls and rear of rubble stone, all under slate roofs, and with prominent pale stone quoins and dressings. Shallow full-width canted porch with a pair of gabled doorways to the centre. Each has a round-arched head with several orders of mouldings, the inner ones with pronounced chevron ornament. These are supported on attached clustered shafts, the central ones shared, with exuberant foliate capitals. Metal openwork gates to doorways, with scroll work, a band of circles at impost level and a large cross. The gables have copings with foliate end bosses and large finials. Single round-headed windows flanking each side of entrance, and similar openings in each canted section. The porch is crowned by a dressed stone parapet with a band of recessed quatrefoils in circles, surmounted by coping of round-arched stones. Above the porch is a large central round-headed window. It contains 2 inner round-arched openings and a roundel above, the inner openings also 2-light with roundel. The arches spring off shared ringed shafts with foliate imposts, which continue across the elevation as an impost band. The central window is flanked by single round-headed lights. Above each is a round stone panel containing a blind quatrefoil.

¹ The Listing of the Aberavon Bridge technically is formed of two numbers (22804 - Aberavon Bridge (partly in Port Talbot community) and 14173 - Aberavon Bridge (partly in Aberavon community). Both numbers are for the exact same asset however the Bridge spans the community line for both Port Talbot and Aberavon.

Dressed angle pilasters to gallery level with foliated imposts, which support a raised Lombard frieze to the verges of the gable. The gable is broken by a plain dressed string course, above which are 3 stepped round-headed louvres with continuous hood mould and a further string course at impost level. The narrow end bays each have a single round-headed window at gallery level set in a tall recessed panel, above a short 2-light window, the lights with shouldered heads. These side bays have parapets in the same style as the porch, with hipped roofs set back behind. Partly indecipherable stone below centre porch columns, inscribed 'This Memorial was laid August .. 1880 by ...' (indecipherable).

Two-storey 6-bay side walls with 2-light windows, those to the lower storey have flat shouldered heads; those above are plate traceried with round-headed lights and a small circle above. Replaced wooden window frames, except for lower S windows. To the S elevation, a late C20 staircase turret replaces the E windows. To its L is a link corridor to the late C20 vestry, of pale snecked stone with a hipped roof. The lower L window is blocked with stone. The N side is 4-window to the upper storey, with 2 windows below. The scar of the former vestry gable is visible to the L, within which is the remains of a blocked round-headed window with yellow brick dressing. The E gable end bears a roundel at mid-level with pierced circular lights, above 4 single square headed lights."

4.2.2 The Grade II listed Forecourt Walls, Railings and Gates to Ebenezer Chapel (22805).

The Forecourt Walls, Railings and Gates to Ebenezer Chapel is described as follows in the summary description of listed buildings (Cadw);

"Centrally-placed ashlar gate piers with chamfered angles, bases with chamfered top edges and ornate capstones, flanked by low snecked walls with saddleback ashlar copings. These support short iron railings, the uprights with alternating fleur-de-lis and scrolled finials. Open arches with decorated cusped heads between uprights and below top rail. A frieze of small quatrefoils is set between double bottom rails, also with fleur-de-lis finials. Double iron gates to entrance in a similar style, with 3 bands of quatrefoils, the upper ones with finials. Ashlar end piers to match gate piers, with rubble stone walls returning to E and adjoining the chapel. Set in the N face of the S wall is an oval iron plaque inscribed 'ebenezer/ baptist church/ 1836'."

4.2.3 Evaluation of the setting (Ebenezer Chapel (14174) and Forecourt Walls, Railings and Gates to Ebenezer Chapel (22805) (Stage 2)

The current setting of Chapel and Forecourt lie within an urbanised area, constructed during the industrialisation of the town, approximately 34m to the south of the Princess Royal Theatre.

The church and forecourt lie on the northern edge of Port Talbot town, bounded to the south by the River Afan, to the north by the Princess Royal Theatre, council offices, carparking and courtyard and to the west by a modern shopping centre.

Planted trees and open spaces feature within the courtyard and its urbanisation, offering a contrast to the surrounding buildings.

The current surrounds are largely dominated by modern developments, with the Princess Royal Theatre and council offices having been constructed during the 1970s-1980s.

The Chapel now stands in isolation to modern developments, as a result of the immediate surrounding modernisation and redevelopment in the 1970s-1980s.

The original significance of the Baptist Chapel and its setting when originally constructed off Talbot Street (1880s), is not known and it appears that it was no different essentially from other buildings off Talbot Street. The mapping consulted does not distinguish much in terms of what individual buildings were, however, a public house at one end of the street and a police station at the other with the chapel set back in between them is noted. The front elevation was likely the only elevation clearly visible to the passing public when built, although the south facing elevation may also have been partially open. The chapel was one of a number of chapels within the immediate area and in that respect not unusual in its day. However it was not far from the centre of the old town lying to the northeast.

Since the redevelopment throughout the 1970s-1980s, the clearance of surrounding buildings has afforded a prominence in terms of setting to the chapel, more so than it had before and altered its relationship to the original setting of the Chapel within a community terraced setting. All aspects of the building are now on view to the passing public.

4.2.4 Aberavon Bridge (14173 / 22804) Grade II listed.

The Cadw description of listed buildings describes the bridge as follows:

"Bridge of 3 low segmental arches with flat deck. Spandrels and parapets faced with coursed stone; voussoirs, pilasters and cutwaters of tooled dressed stone. The voussoirs are of pecked stone, the raised keystones with herring bone decoration. The central keystone on the S side bears the dates '1842' and '1893'. The pilasters rise from the triangular cutwaters to the tops of the parapets. String course to parapets which have flat stone coping. Straight abutments, mainly rebuilt. "

4.2.5 Evaluation of the setting (Aberavon Bridge (14173/22804) (Stage 2)

The current setting of Bridge, also lies within a modernised urban area and is a well-used pedestrian route crossing the river. The bridge has been altered with provision of a covered roof, approximately 86m to the south of the Princess Royal Theatre.

The original bridge likely not significantly changed since construction provided a road access over the river serving inhabitants on both sides of the river and the Aberavon station which was at the east end of the bridge. It was the main route crossing the river for inhabitant and still a busy artery.

Modernisation has opened up access to the bridge from the council offices whereas it prior to that there were buildings lining the road leading to the bridge. The bridge itself is now much more visible, with its full profile on show from the north and south of the asset.

² The Listing of the Aberavon Bridge technically is formed of two numbers (22804 - Aberavon Bridge (partly in Port Talbot community) and 14173 - Aberavon Bridge (partly in Aberavon community). Both numbers are for the exact same asset however the Bridge spans the community line for both Port Talbot and Aberavon.

4.3 Stage 3

4.2.4 Evaluation of the potential impact of development (Stage 3)

The proposed external works to the theatre and council buildings are fairly limited in terms of landscaping, and could add to the existing ecological environment with increased planting, and would open up the space.

The biggest impact visually, would be the provision of the glass box extension to the Princess Theatre, altering the appearance of the entrance, and its closeness with the noted assets.

However, given that the surrounding modern developments have already had an impact on the original setting of the church, and that the proposals are fairly sympathetic to the 'style' and 'theme' of the surrounding area, the impact on the known heritage assets will be minimal.

During the course of the works, it is anticipated that access to the Church and Bridge would be temporarily restricted. It is not expected that any sightlines will be impeded by the proposed works. If so they would be temporary.

Overall, the proposed development is evaluated to have very little impact on the overall setting of the Chapel or Bridge.

4.4 Stage 4

Consider options to mitigate or improve that potential impact

Considering the proposal there is little offered as mitigation as any changes are expected to be of a superficial nature to the historic assets. However, for that temporary period there are other access points into the site from the neighbouring roads.

Overall, it is considered that with the proposed sympathetic changes the renovation proposals will equate to a "Negligible" outcome for the setting of the Listed Buildings. Indeed the outcome for the long term may be considered to be beneficial.

5. Conclusions

This assessment has undertaken Stages 1-4 of Cadw guidance in respect of the setting of the historic assets. At Stage 1, the assessment identified three assets as being potentially affected by the proposed changes: Ebenezer Chapel, (Grade II* Listed Building (14174); the forecourt walls, railings and gates to the Ebenezer Chapel (Grade II Listed Building (22805) and Aberavon Bridge (14173/22804).

In respect of the chapel, forecourt walls, railings, gates and the bridge, the proposed development is assessed as having no direct impact on the three identified assets. The proposed works are focused solely on The Princess Royal Theatre and the surrounding area.

Overall, with the proposed sympathetic changes, it is considered that the renovation proposals will equate to a "Negligible" outcome for the setting of the Listed Buildings. Indeed the outcome for the long term may be considered to be beneficial with the increased green and open space.

6. Sources consulted

6.1 Legislation, planning and guidance

Ancient Monument and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.

Cadw, 2011, Conservation Principles for the sustainable management of the historic environment in Wales.

Neath Port Talbot CBC Local Development Plan (2011-2026) (January 2016).

The Historic Environment Supplementary Planning Guidance (April 2019)

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2020, Standards and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-based Assessments.

Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Welsh Government, 2017, Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment.

Welsh Government, 2021, *Planning Policy Wales*, Edition 11, Chapter 6, The Historic Environment.

Welsh Government, 2021, Future Wales: The National Plan 2040.

6.2 Cartographic sources

Historic maps accessed from: National Museum of Scotland collection (<https://maps.nls.uk>) and private collection.

Date	Description	Scale
1917	Ordnance Survey Glamorgan XXV.13 1917	25 inch to the Mile
1884	Ordnance Survey Glamorgan Sheet XXV Surveyed: 1875 to 1877.	6 inches to the Mile
1900	Ordnance Survey Glamorgan Sheet XXV.SW Revised: 1897.	6 inches inch to the Mile
1921	Ordnance Survey Glamorgan Sheet XXV Revised: 1913 to 1914.	6 inches inch to the Mile
1952	Glamorgan Sheet XXV.SW Revised: 1947, Published: 1952	6 inches inch to the Mile

6.3 Websites

Neath Port Talbot Council Website: <https://www.npt.gov.uk/> (Accessed 21/03/24)

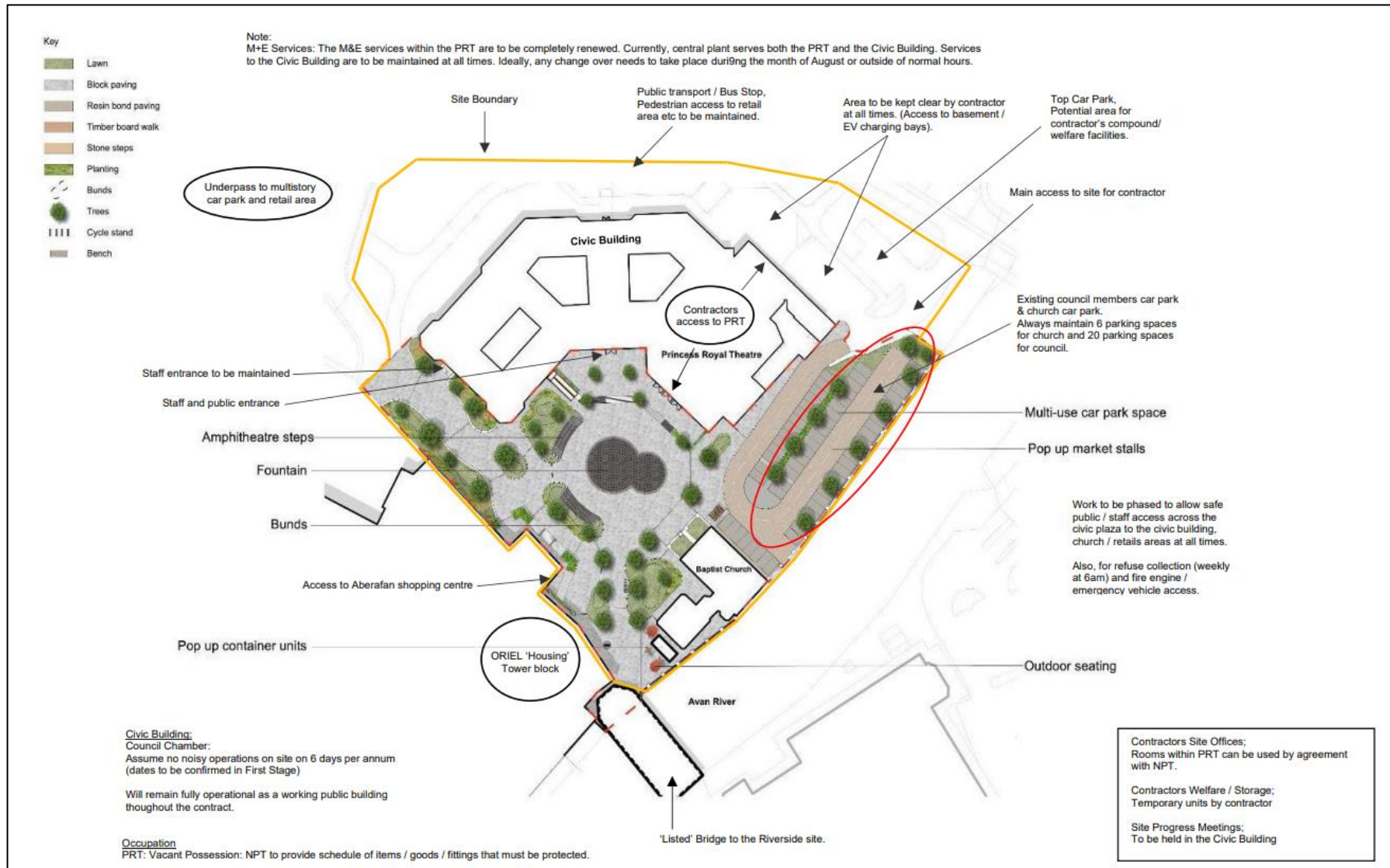


Figure 1. Plans showing the proposed alterations to the grounds of The Princess Royal Theatre.



Figure 2. Ordnance Survey map 1884.

Glamorgan Sheet XXV. Scale 6 inches to the mile, Surveyed: 1875 to 1877, Published: 1884. The chapel is surrounded by densely packed residential and municipal buildings.



Figure 3. OS mapping of 1921

Glamorgan Sheet XXV.SW. Scale 6 inches to the mile. Revision of 1914, published 1921. The area around the chapel remains built up, development also south of the river.



Figure 4. View to southwest showing theatre and Ebenezer Church.



Figure 5. View to north west of theatre from Ebenezer Church.



Figure 6. View of theatre from Ebenezer Chapel.

View north from the chapel, towards the theatre with the car park on the right of the image.



Figure 7. View North West from Tesco.

Looking across the river towards the chapel showing the theatre and surrounding buildings.



Figure 8. View of the chapel from the theatre entrance.

Looking south from the theatre, the multi-storey Aberafan shopping centre is visible on the right of the image, the bridge is between the chapel and the shopping centre, The brick building to the left of the image is Tesco.



Figure 9. View north of the listed bridge. The chapel is visible beyond the bridge.