

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT (PART 2) IN SUPPORT OF THE LISTED BUILDING CONSENT FOR THE ALTERATIONS TO:

JERUSALEM CHAPEL, 1 STATION ROAD, PONTRHYDYFEN, PORT TALBOT,
SA12 9SG

Document Ref: 23-448/303

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Edited by: SEAGREY Design Ltd - 2026

INTRODUCTION

The applicants and owners of Jerusalem Chapel are in the process of renovating this disused historic building and converting it into a family home.

The design principles they wish to adopt involve maintaining all original features wherever possible, using careful restoration techniques and also making careful additions to facilitate its use as a domestic property.

While doing this, they will also be improving the construction quality of the building following the guidance set out in current building regulations approved documents wherever practical bearing in mind that the original Chapel was erected in 1828 of solid stone construction.

The main Chapel is a traditional Welsh Chapel which would have originally offered seating in level pews for its congregation at Ground Floor, with raked pew seating at First Floor level.

The upper-level accommodation is currently accessed by two staircases situated on both sides of the front entrance hall.

At the rear of the Chapel there is a double-height annex where the altar and organ would have been located.

To the right-hand side of the Chapel (South-East facing elevation) there is a later single-storey addition which was built to house the toilets for the congregation's use. It is unclear when this addition was constructed, although likely to have been around 1956-60, and its character does not

closely match the main Chapel. The modifications to this area proposed by the owners will serve to improve the presence of this structure, as described in more detail later within this report.

Jerusalem Methodist Chapel has a pitched roof with feature gable ends and parapet wall detailing at the front and rear. The roof finish is Welsh slate. The present building was built in 1876 by the architect W. Jones of Rhondda, designed in the sub-classical style with a Gable-entry plan, round-headed window and door openings, a roundel with accentuated quarter stones and a dentillated cornice.

The main walls are solid masonry construction and approximately 500mm thick. The walls of the side annex consist of two layers of brickwork with no cavity.

The front elevation comprises traditional facing pollstone which has been squared and laid to courses, with stone arched window and door heads. There is also feature smooth bathstone bands and to top of plinth and at eaves level.

A number of areas of bathstone are weathered, which can be expected, due to age and weather exposure of the Chapel's location.

The side and rear walls of the Chapel are finished in a mixture of roughcast cement render and spa render.

THE PROPOSED SCHEDULE OF WORKS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

EXTERNAL

Improve the thermal and water repellence of the building envelope using a natural eco-friendly thermal insulation render system called 'Bauwer Light' to replace the existing roughcast cement render applied to the side and rear elevations and also to be used on the internal walls where damaged. The external render of the Chapel is currently in poor condition, having cracked in many areas.

This has led to water ingress and damp throughout the building, a problem that was made worse by the fact that the roof was in poor condition also. The roof was repaired by the previous owners of the Chapel who gained planning approval for a similar renovation in 2008 but did not commence the work. As a result, this approval expired and this new application is now being submitted.

While the Bauwer render system is to be applied to the side and rear walls of the Chapel, the front elevation is formed in stonework and this will remain as an important feature of the building's external appearance. This work still remains to be done.

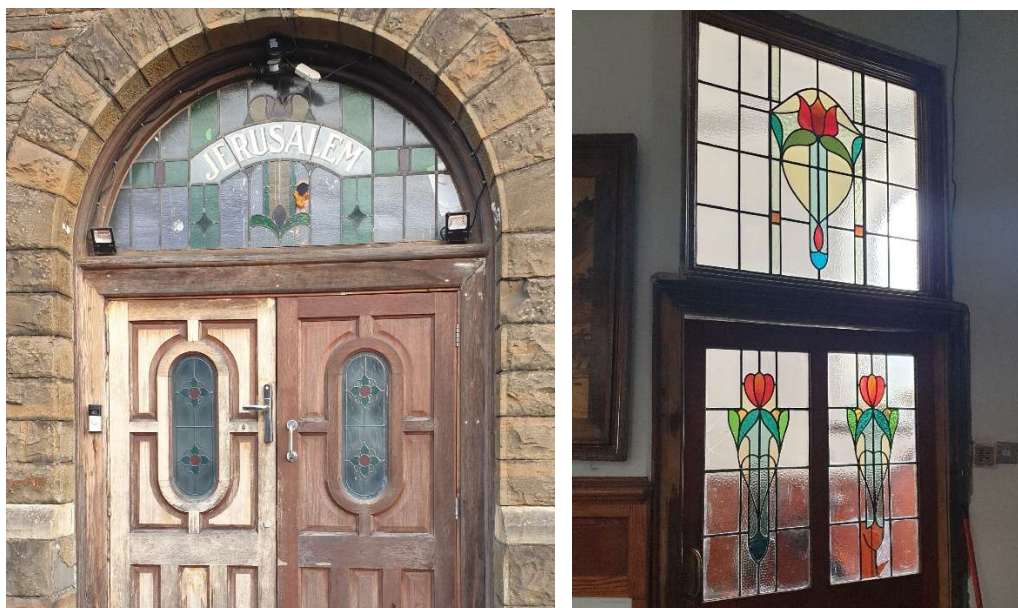
This stonework is to be carefully cleaned and renovated. Its condition is generally sound but repair work to the sandstone window cills and horizontal feature banding is required to be completed by specialists. This work still remains to be done.

A number of the windows had been vandalised, including those made from stained glass. The owners will replace any glazed units and repair frames wherever possible. Where damaged beyond repair, replacement windows which closely match the existing will be sourced. A stained-glass window restoration specialist will be involved in the aspects of the work where appropriate.

A later side extension has been added to the existing building. The external finish and windows will match those applied to the main building (the Bauwer system). This part of the building has also been enlarged to accommodate small extension to the rear for the Utility Room, and another small

extension is proposed at the front to allow for internal access to the old annex, as discussed in more detail in the later section of this report.

Originally a new window was proposed on the South-East facing wall at First Floor to create a view over the picturesque valley beyond, however this has now been omitted from the plans.



INTERNAL GROUND FLOOR

A limited number of internal modifications were proposed to adapt the building for residential accommodation. Overall, the owners have retained the open plan feel of this historic building.

Drawing numbers 23-448P/110 and 23-448P/111 illustrate the existing and proposed floor plan and elevation arrangements.

On the Ground Floor, a small amount of adaptation has been made as the applicants have achieved an open-plan arrangement, with the potential to subdivide using non-permanent screens when needed. As most of the original floor was damaged or rotten – this was replaced with new timber joists with insulation between and OSB flooring grade sheeting fitted on top as a substrate to the new tiled floor.

Beyond this, the flat roofed extension is now proposed to be slightly enlarged by extending it forwards to provide new access from the Chapel directly into the existing Annex, via a new door created from the ground floor window in that location. While the proposed extension of this area will move the front wall towards Station Road and the main building frontage, it will remain set back to ensure the important stone facade remains the primary elevation and retains its prominence and significance in the streetscape. We are also seeking consent for the additional extension at the back of the Annex which was constructed some time ago. This will form part of the new Utility space and cannot be seen from the road.

The roof of the Annex was removed and built up to a higher level, with a flat roof – the owner has planned in the future to install solar panels on top of this roof so they can't be seen from the road and will not interfere with the integrity of the Chapel itself. This area is a good location for the panels as it has plenty of daylight most days.

Inside the Chapel, the rear double-height lean-to area (where the original organ was, now removed) has been converted into a kitchen with a large roof light inserted above to admit some natural light

into the space. This area (previously the altar and organ area of the Chapel) is set at a higher level and the existing side steps either side will be used to access it after they have been carefully renovated and re- varnished in their original colour.



INTERNAL FIRST FLOOR

The original First Floor was largely composed of solid pine, raked pew seating (though this was damaged in places - as have the pews on the Ground Floor). The owners of the property have salvaged this timber for re-use within the building as it is an important part of the original building's heritage and character.

At the First Floor level they have used parts of the pews as flooring to maintain the walkway around the front of the gallery as a circulation route.

The walkway is accessed from the Ground Floor via stairs on both sides of the Entrance Hall into the full height, open plan living space. They also propose the introduction of a novel addition to the space that being a new staircase as direct access to the First Floor level with a slide next to the stairs which will be constructed from the timber salvaged from the old pews. The slide sits directly adjacent to the new inner stairs and will be accessed from the First Floor landing set at gallery walkway height.

Once at First Floor landing level it will be possible to circulate between one side of the Chapel and the other via the existing gallery walkway. Central to this is a new set of steps which will allow access to an upper, open plan living space with some different levels. This space has been created by building up the sloping pew area to form a level platform. The robust timber joists under the existing raked seating and the cast iron columns below are more than adequate to support this new level and are sufficient to satisfy the requirements of the Building Inspector.

Beyond the Open Plan living area at First Floor level, towards the rear of the Chapel are two new bedrooms located on either side of the balcony. Again, the level floor for these has been formed by constructing new timber floor joists and columns off the existing raked structure below. The roof for each room has been created by bolting a wallplate to the Chapel wall and running rafters at 400mm

centres off this fixed wallplate to the other on the new framework created by the new timbers. These walls and ceilings have been insulated and clad with some of the pew panelling, decorative plaster mouldings and plasterboard. The side walls (over the balcony) have 6No. obscured windows to each room to bring in shared light from the interior.

A shower room is also positioned in front of the right hand side bedroom, see Proposed plans.

The two existing staircases linked to the Ground Floor entrance hall also remain in place as direct means of access to and from the First Floor.

REASONING FOR THE PROPOSED WORKS

The new owners of Jerusalem Chapel have converted the building for their own use as a family home.

They greatly value the history and character of their property and wish to adopt a sensitive yet innovative approach to the renovation project.

Previously, the Chapel was in poor condition, having been disused and vandalised over many years.

The owners propose work that is desirable to bring this historic building back to its former glory while adapting it to modern standards in terms of energy performance. The work proposed has reinstated the Chapel as an important landmark within the surrounding community.

The renovation will also prevent further degradation of this historic landmark's features due to water ingress and general lack of maintenance due to its abandonment and misuse.

AREAS OF SPECIAL ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC INTEREST

There are numerous areas which are of architectural and historical interest and the owners greatly value these features. They have retained them all and carefully renovated most of them (work ongoing). Please refer to the photographs which illustrate this report.

These areas include the front elevation stonework, stained glass windows, salvaged timber from the pews (re-used in various places within the building), the decorative ceiling with elaborate ceiling-rose and the internal features of the chapel which has been retained and renovated.



ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED WORK

The work which has been carried out so far on the Chapel will entirely enhance this important building and be appropriate within the building's 'Grade 2' listing.

All of the important historic features are to be retained and repaired where necessary and the new areas of construction will sit within the building sensitively, whilst still creating a large and spacious home. A modest enlargement is proposed to the side building which will improve the proportions of this area when assessed against the main Chapel and its front South-East facing elevation will fit in with the existing Annex scale and plain design. The extended side building will remain set back from the main frontage, maintaining the prominence of the front stone elevation which is the primary Architectural feature of the Chapel externally. This will provide the required Ground Floor Bathroom and Utility space, that will open up onto the small rear area which will be turned into a private courtyard garden amenity.

The repair of damaged render externally, using the Bauwer insulated cladding system will serve to dramatically improve the appearance of the side and rear elevations of the building, while preventing the damp ingress which is currently causing ongoing damage to the Chapel's original stone walls, timberwork and decorative ceiling. The render will be matched to the finish on the main walls of the new extension, and also on the existing side building walls where external insulation will also be applied.

SUMMARY

In summary, the proposed work will serve to improve the building's appearance both internally and externally, while also ensuring the degradation of the important historic features is prevented. The fact that the building will be in full-time occupation as a home will have social benefits for the wider community and all those consulted by the new owners are in support of the renovation of Jerusalem Chapel.

