

**HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT IN SUPPORT OF THE LISTED BUILDING
CONSENT FOR THE ALTERATIONS TO:**

JERUSALEM CHAPEL, STATION ROAD, PONTRHYDYFEN,

PORT TALBOT, SA13 1PB

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INTRODUCTION

The applicants and owners of Jerusalem Chapel intend to renovate this disused historic building and convert it to 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 seating 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 annexe 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 lean-to addition. It is unclear when this addition was constructed 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.

The main 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 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 as to be expected due to the age of the Chapel.

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. 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 stonework is to be carefully cleaned and renovated. Its condition is generally sound but work to the sandstone window cills and horizontal feature banding is required by specialists.
- A number of the windows have been vandalised, including those made from stained glass. The owners will replace 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 these 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. This part of the building is also due to be enlarged to accommodate a bedroom as discussed in more detail in the later section of this report.
- One new window is proposed on the South-East facing window at first floor to create a view over the picturesque valley beyond. This window is identical in size to that adjacent to it and will maintain the original appearance of this elevation where the later lean-to extension (to be enlarged) has already been constructed.

INTERNAL GROUND FLOOR

- A limited number of internal modifications are proposed to adapt the building for residential accommodation. Overall the owners hope to retain the open plan feel of this historic building.
- Drawing numbers PL01 and PL02 illustrate the existing and proposed floor plan and elevation arrangements.
- At ground floor, a small amount of adaption is proposed as the applicants hope to achieve an open-plan arrangement, with the potential to subdivide using sliding screens when needed.
- Beyond this, the hipped roof lean-to extension is to be enlarged by extending it forwards to provide a new ground floor bedroom. While the proposed extension of this area will serve to move the front wall towards Station Road and the main building frontage, it will remain set back to ensure the important stone façade remains the primary elevation and retains its prominence and significance in the streetscape.
- The rear double-height lean-to area is to be converted to 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 slightly higher level and the existing side steps 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 is largely composed of solid pine, raked pew seating, though this has been damaged in places - as have the pews on the ground floor. The owners of the property hope to salvage this timber for re-use within the building as it is an important part of the original building's heritage and character.
- At first floor they intend to maintain the walkway around the front of the gallery as a circulation route.
- The walkway will be accessed from the ground floor via a stair on the left hand side of the full height, open plan living space. They also propose the introduction of a novel addition to the space that being a slide which will be constructed from the timber salvaged from the old pews. The slide sits directly adjacent to the new inner stair and is 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 set at one level.
- This space will be 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 a full

structural report will be produced by a qualified engineer at detailed design stage to satisfy the requirements of the Building Inspector.

- Beyond the Open Plan living area at first floor, towards the rear of the Chapel are two new bedrooms. Again, the level floor for these will be formed by constructing new timber floor joists and columns off the existing raked structure below.
- A shower room is also positioned in front of the right hand side bedroom.
- 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 wish to convert 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.
- At present the Chapel is in poor condition, having being disused and vandalised over many years.
- The owners proposed work 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 will reinstate 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 non-occupation or use.

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 will be retaining them all and carefully renovating them. Please refer to the photographs which accompany this report.
- These areas include the front elevation stonework, stained glass windows, salvaged timber from the pews (to be re-used in various places within the building), the decorative ceiling with elaborate ceiling rose.

ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED WORK

- The work proposed to modify 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.
- The modest enlargement to the lean-to side building will improve the proportions of this area when assessed against the main Chapel and its front South-East facing

- elevation be more in keeping with the original front elevation. A single window in the style of the existing Chapel windows will replace the two small windows and the pair of modern single doors that currently face Station Road. The extended lean-to 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.
- 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 stopping the damp ingress which is currently causing ongoing damage to the Chapel's original stone walls, timberwork and decorative ceiling.

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 stopped. The fact that the building will be in full time occupation as a home will have social benefits on the wider community and all those consulted by the new owners are in support of the renovation of Jerusalem Chapel.