Design and Access Statement

Former Presbyterian Church, Holt

Change of Use to a Single Dwelling

for Mr G Conway

Job No: 4235/1
Date: 23.04.2024
Rev: A

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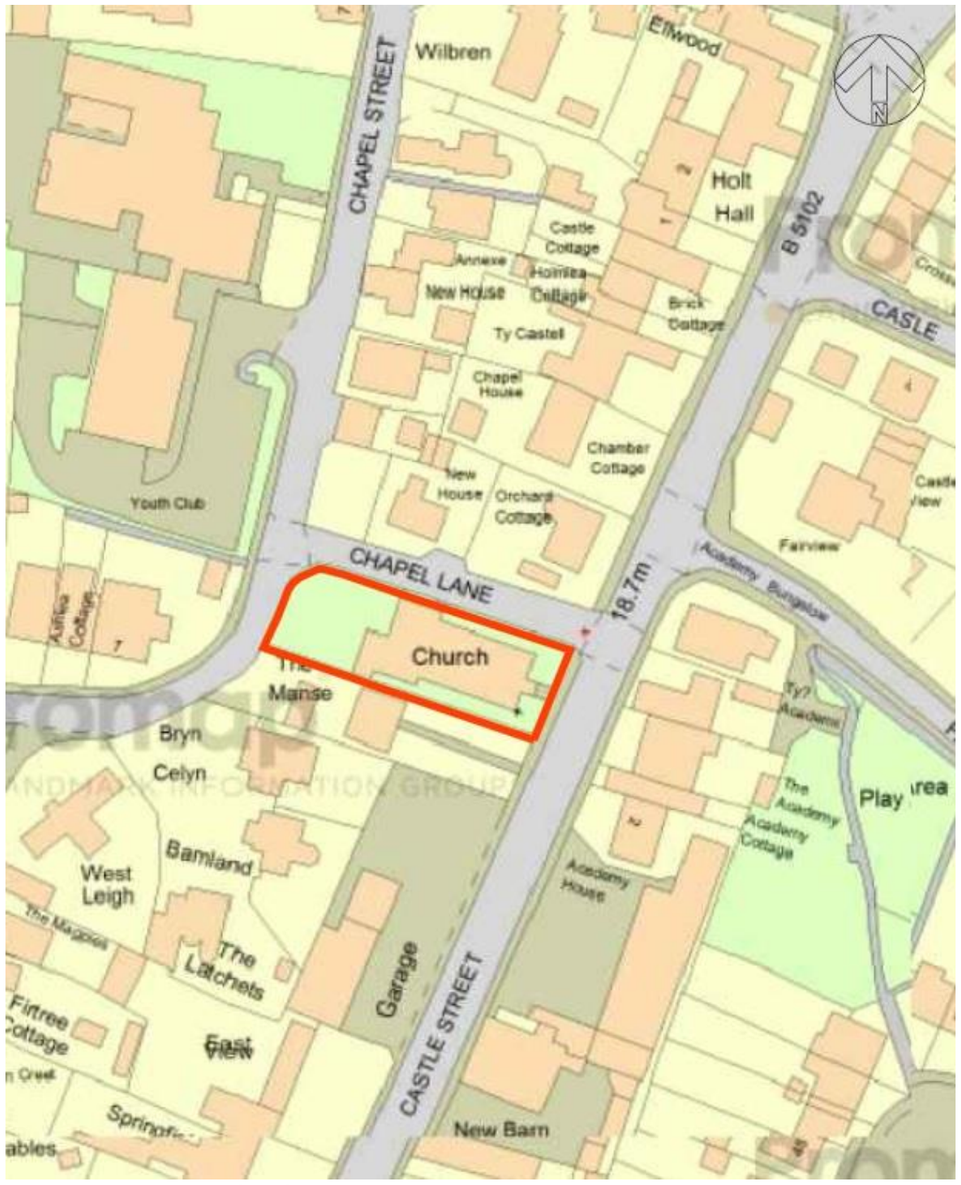
5.0 Summary

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1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this Design & Access Statement is to provide background supporting information in relation to the submitted Planning & Listed Building Consent Application for the conversion of The Former Presbyterian Church, Castle Street, Holt into residential use as a single dwelling, including the brief and to explain the reasons behind the proposals.



SITE LOCATION PLAN (NTS)

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2.0 Context Assessment

2.1 The former Presbyterian Church was constructed in 1865 and is a grade II listed building, being designated on 17 July 1996. The listing includes the forecourt walls and railings. It is listed as a *"good example of Presbyterian church architecture by a noted architect containing a good contemporary interior scheme".*

2.2 The listing describes the exterior of the property as *"gothic revival style with bar tracery. Sandstone blocks of irregular sizes laid in courses with slate roof. Gable end facing street has central gabled entrance porch, ordered stone door surround with carved foliated capitals, wooden door. Stone belfry to left with decorated stone buttresses. Windows throughout of Early English, 'First Pointed' style with quatrefoil and cinquefoil detail. To rear adjoining school room, sandstone block construction with simple lancet windows. Late C20 single storey extension to rear."*

2.3 The interior is described as *"there is a fairly complete contemporary scheme. Arch-braced roof timbers rise from painted stone corbels; there is a decorative timber frieze. 4 and 5 pointed star shapes are motifs which are carried through from the glass in the tracery to pierced designs in the roof joinery and incised shapes on the pew ends. Where the windows are paired they are separated by stone shafts with foliated capitals. At the liturgical W end there is a pitch pine lobby with blind cusped arcading. At the liturgical E end is a central pulpit of similar character with steps up on each side with arcaded balustrading. A door on each side leads off to a schoolroom. Windows have coloured and painted glass in the tracery but are otherwise plain with coloured glass margins. Pews are of pitch pine with painted numbers. On the liturgical E wall are 3 later C19 monuments in Neoclassical style commemorating former ministers and elders of the church; two of them are by Mossford of Overton. The schoolroom has exposed timbers in the roof."*

2.4 The site is located within Holt Conservation Area.

2.5 According to the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) Regional Historic Environment Record the building is on the Wrexham County Borough Council Buildings at Risk Register.

2.6 The building is situated on the west side of Castle Street (front), while also having roadside boundaries to both Chapel Lane (side) and Castle Street (rear) and sits within its own enclosure surrounded by low sandstone walls surmounted with cast iron railings.

2.7 The application site area (edged in red) is 0.076 Hectares (0.188 Acres).



FRONT ELEVATION (FACING CASTLE STREET)

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2.8 The church use has long ceased, and the building is currently vacant and currently comprises three elements, the Church, The School Room and the later C20 rear extension.

2.9 The late C20 extension has been constructed using modern materials and finishes and has no architectural merit.

2.10 Externally, there is vehicular access and parking to the rear of the property with space for 4/5 vehicles plus turning. The existing landscaping is predominantly grass with a number of small to medium sized trees and shrubs.

2.11 The building is currently vacant and has been used for temporary storage, having last been used as a place of worship in 2012. The lack of occupancy and use is leading to some deterioration. A new use for the building and occupancy will serve to protect the fabric and give the building a new lease of life.

2.12 A photographic survey has been submitted as part of the Planning and Listed Building Consent applications to show the existing internal and external building condition and surrounding landscaping.



SIDE ELEVATION (CHAPEL LANE)



SIDE ELEVATION (FACING THE MANSE)

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3.0 Planning Status

3.1 The main planning considerations relate to the building's listed status and its location within the Holt Conservation Area.

3.2 In relation to the Listed Building Status, please refer to the attached Heritage Impact Assessment.

3.3 The principal goal of a Conservation Area is to protect the overall character of the area by controlling development. Development within a Conservation Area should present no overall harm or may present an improvement or benefit to the Conservation Area. We believe the proposals comply with these requirements.

3.4 A Pre-application Enquiry was submitted to Wrexham County Borough Council on 29 June 2023, and a response was received from Sharon Holman on 6 September 2023. The response concluded "From the information provided, it is considered that a change of use would be acceptable in principle, subject to the sensitive alteration to the listed building which protects its integrity."
A full copy of the pre-application response has been included as part of the application submission.

3.5 Highways matters raised as part of the pre-application response have been considered when developing the proposals and the required 3 number parking spaces for a 3/4 bedroom dwelling has been met. The proposal increase visibility when exiting the rear driveway and likewise to Chapel Lane.

3.6 The proposals include for a garden area above the minimum 50 sq.m required for a dwelling designed to accommodate 3 or more people, and provisions have been made for the storage of waste/ recycling bins.

3.7 No neighbour consultations have taken place.

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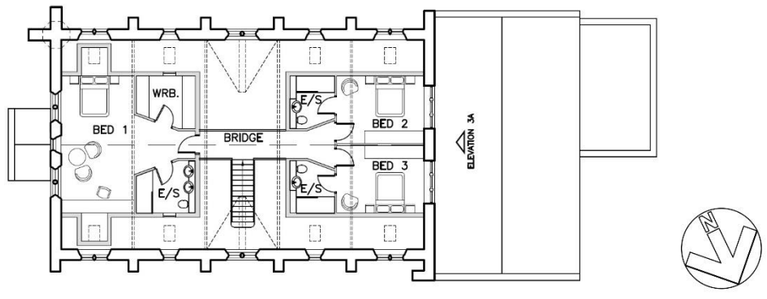
4.0 The Proposal

4.1 Structure

- We have carried out an initial inspection of the building which has revealed it generally to be in a good structural condition but requiring some remedial as part of the conversion/ restoration.

- The proposal to add first floor accommodation within the main church itself will not impose any additional load on the existing structure. The first floor accommodation is to be constructed using simple structural steel framework carried on new pad foundations.

- The building is capable of being converted to its new use without affecting the existing structure except for the late C20 rear extension which is in poor condition without any architectural merit and will be replaced by a new smaller single storey structure of appropriate design, built to meet current building regulations.



PROPOSED 1ST FLOOR PLAN

4.2 Description

4.2.1 The proposal is to convert the Former Presbyterian Church to form a single family dwelling with parking area and amenity space, while remaining sympathetic to the existing form and features of the existing building. It is proposed to carry out the following changes:

4.2.2 The Church

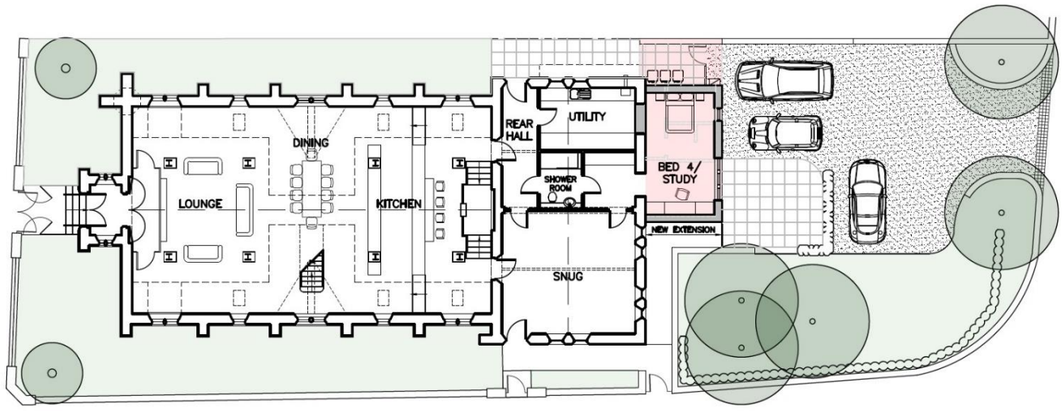
- Retain the ground floor area as one space providing an open plan lounge, dining area and kitchen.

- Provide a level floor stepping down towards the Schoolroom entrance.

- Insert a modern first floor pair of enclosed spaces each supported by 4 columns with cantilevered beams carrying the new floors to serve bedrooms and en-suite bathrooms. The bedroom areas to be linked by a modern bridge with a stair rising from the ground floor. This allows much of the open aspect of the church to be retained and avoids subdivision of the existing windows.

- Bedroom 1 will contain and feature the existing front (easterly) gable windows.

- Bedrooms 2 and 3 will be served by two new windows of suitable design placed in the rear (westerly) gables in the space behind the Schoolroom roof. The new windows will also provide a means of escape to comply with Building Regulations requirements.



PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR PLAN

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- In addition to the windows referred to above we propose a small number (4 per roof slope) of conservation rooflights placed in the main church roof slopes which will throw additional natural light into the ground floor area and natural light and ventilation to Bedroom 1. The rooflights to Bedroom 1 will also provide a means of escape to comply with Building Regulations requirements.

- In order to improve natural light in and some vision out of the ground floor space we propose the obscure glass in the leaded light windows facing Chapel Lane be replaced with clear glass, hardly changing the exterior but avoiding the rooms being claustrophobic.

- Consideration has been given to retaining existing interior features. The existing pitch pine lobby, existing pulpit and sections of the existing wall panelling will be retained, as being key elements of the churches architectural composition.

- Detailed consideration has been given to improvements to thermal insulation, where feasible. This includes insulating suspended timber floors, adding insulation to existing flat ceilings and insulating the new 1st floor structure, as well as the addition of secondary glazing to existing windows.

- Heating is to be via a new gas boiler (the building has an existing gas supply) serving a hot water underfloor heating system.

- Ventilation has been considered as part of the design and the introduction of rooflights in conjunction with existing opening windows will allow for the main habitable rooms to be ventilated naturally. Mechanical ventilation is to be provided to new bathrooms and shower rooms, utility room and kitchen hob in accordance with current Building Regulations.

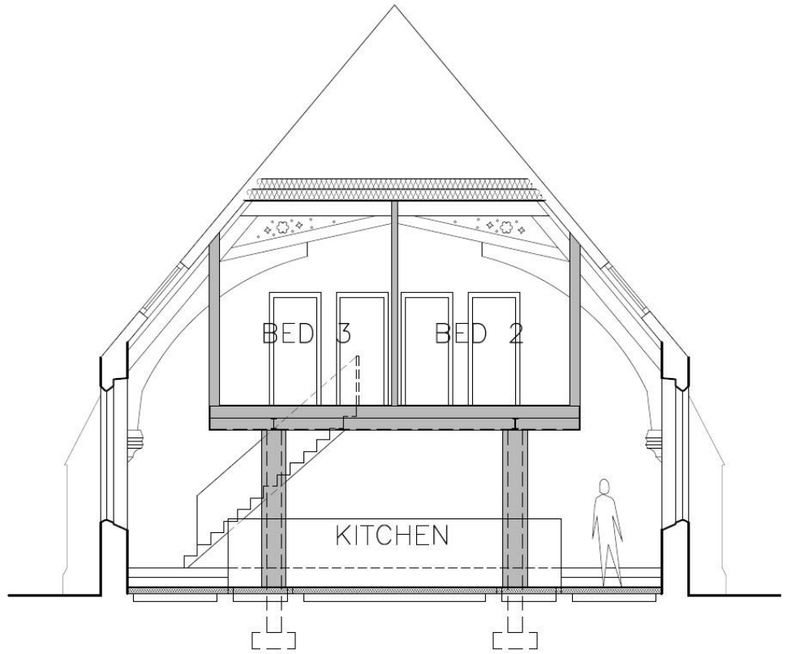
4.2.3 The Schoolroom

- The Schoolroom can be retained to its full height with new accommodation to include a large rear hall, snug with garden views, shower room and utility facilities.

4.2.4 The Late C20 Extension

- It is proposed to demolish the late C20 single storey extension, and it be replaced with a new smaller single storey flat roof extension to be designed and constructed in materials more suitable for its location.

- The demolition of the existing extension will allow for access from the car park area to the west of the building to the existing side door (south) into the new rear hall and allow external space for bin storage and an EV charging point.



TYPICAL PROPOSED SECTION

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4.2.5 External works

- Existing sandstone walls and railings to be retained, repaired, and refurbished.
- Existing paving to be retained and made good to the main entrance (Castle Street) and to the secondary entrance (Chapel Lane).
- Drive access and parking areas to be finished in permeable resin bound gravel, with stone setts to the entrance from Chapel Street.
- New Yorkstone paving is to be laid where indicated on plan to provide a patio area and to the newly created rear access/ bin storage area to the rear (south).

4.3 Size

Gross internal floor area of the proposed dwelling will be:

Ground Floor	273.8 sq. m
1st Floor	87.6 sq. m
Total	361.4 sq. m

4.4 Scale

The main building elements will remain as existing. The proposed replacement rear single storey extension will be smaller than the late C20 single storey element which is to be demolished. The scale of the proposed extension will be appropriate to its setting.

4.5 Access

- Vehicle access will be via the existing entrance from Chapel Lane. Existing shrubbery will be cleared from the raised planting beds adjacent to the entrance to aid visibility when exiting the property. The proposed new hedge is to be set back from the boundary so as to maintain visibility.
- Pedestrian access is to remain as existing with gated pedestrian entrances on both Castle Street and Chapel Lane. Pedestrian access from the driveway will be improved with new access provided to the existing rear (south) entrance, leading to the rear hall.

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- Level access is provided to both the rear entrances from both the parking area and Chapel Lane, and the rear entrance into the Snug currently provides level access into the dwelling.

- Due to existing internal floor levels, level access cannot be achieved throughout the building, however internal changes in level have been designed to meet the needs for the ambulant disabled.

4.6 Climate aspects

- The site is located near the centre of Holt and within easy walking distances of a wide range of services, shops, schools and public transport.

- The proposals have been designed to maximise natural daylight to reduce artificial light use.

- Natural ventilation is to be provided to all rooms.

- The proposals, where appropriate will include the addition of insulation, to increase the thermal efficiency of the existing building, such as new insulation to the suspended timber ground floor structure and existing flat ceilings, and to the proposed new 1st floor structure.

- The proposed new single storey extension will be constructed to meet current building regulation standards as a minimum.

- Secondary glazing will be installed to existing windows to improve the thermal efficiency and reduce drafts, while providing access to existing windows for cleaning and maintenance and to gain access to existing openable windows for ventilation purposes.

- A new electric vehicle charging point will be included as part of the development fur use by future occupiers.

4.7 Ecology and Landscaping

- A phase 1 ecology survey is provided as part of the application.

- All the existing trees are to be retained. Alterations proposed to the driveway and landscaping are minimal and will not impact on the existing trees.

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- Existing shrubs to the rear garden area are to be cut-back and maintained at a low level to provide increased visibility for vehicles when exiting the driveway and for vehicles existing Chapel Lane.

- Proposed new hedges to the rear garden area will provide privacy, while its position will allow for visibility to be maintained for vehicles.

4.8 Flood Risk

The building is not in a flood plain nor in a location which suffers from flooding.

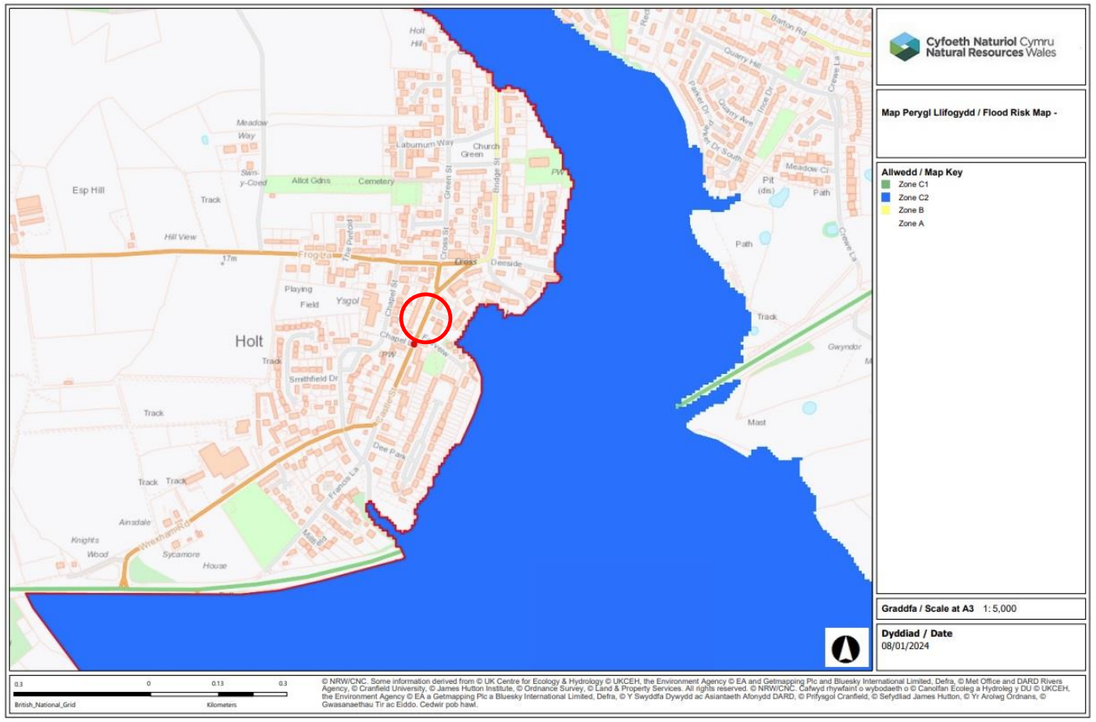
4.9 Drainage

- <u>Foul water</u>
  Waste from new soil pipes is to connect to the existing combined drainage system within the site boundary, as indicated on the proposed ground floor plan.

- <u>Surface water</u>
  Existing rainwater pipe drainage connections will remain as existing. The proposed new single storey extension will connect into the existing surface water drainage system on site via the connections already in place for the previous late C20 extension.

4.10 Waste and Recycling

- A bin storage area is to be provided externally, accessed from the rear hall, with adequate space provisions for general waste, garden and recycling bins.



NRW Flood Risk Map

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5.0 Summary

- The proposals will bring the former church building back in to use by providing a sustainable use. We believe the proposals will make the best use of the building, and its conversion to a dwelling will act to protect, preserve and enhancing the building for future generations.

- The use as a single dwelling is appropriate in this village setting and will cause no disturbance to residents or create any traffic issues by utilising current off-street parking to the rear while retaining a private garden area.

- The rebuilding of the single storey rear extension will enhance the appearance of the building.

- The introduction of secondary glazing and opportunity to insulate existing structures will increase the thermal performance of the building and reduce energy costs.

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