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| Your Ref/Eich Cyf | |
| Our Ref/Ein Cyf | ENQ/2023 /0144 |
| Date/Dyddiad | 04/09/2023 |
| Ask for/Gofynner am | Sharon Holman |
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Dear Sir/Madam,

**Town and Country Planning Act 1990**

**CHANGE OF USE TOGETHER WITH ALTERATIONS / IMPROVEMENTS TO FORM A SINGLE DWELLING WITH HOME OFFICE/STUDIO AT THE FORMER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, CASTLE STREET, HOLT, WREXHAM.**

I refer to your enquiry for the above proposal, in connection with which both applications for Listed Building Consent (LBC) and Full planning permission, are required.

The relevant planning policies that apply to the proposal are:

**National Policy**

- Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11
- Technical Advice Note 12 Design
- Technical Advice Note 18 Transport
- Technical Advice Note 24 The Historic Environment

**Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Policies**

- GDP1 General development principles
- H2 Housing
- EC4 Trees
- EC6 Biodiversity conservation
- EC13 Surface Water
- T8 Parking
- EC9 Listed Building
- EC7 Conservation Areas

**Strategic Policies**

- PS1
- PS2
- PS3
- PS4

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The UDP is available from our website:
https://www.wrexham.gov.uk/service/development-plans-and-other-planningpolicy/wrexham-unitary-development-plan

**Relevant Local Planning Guidance Notes (LPGN)**

- 4 Conservation Areas
- 16 Parking Standards
- 17 Trees
- 21 Space around Dwellings
- 32 Biodiversity

**Validation information for Full Planning application**

- Completed Full Application
- Site location plan
- Detailed existing and proposed elevations and floor plans
- Proposed and existing cross sections
- Details of the proposed windows and doors
- Design and Access Statement
- Ecology Report (bats and birds) including method statement, RAMs and mitigation proposals
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment
- Structural Survey
- Conservation Method Statement
- Hard and soft landscaping and planting scheme, including boundary treatment plan.

**Validation information for application for LBC**

- Completed LBC Application form
- Site location plan
- Detailed existing and proposed elevations and floor plans
- Proposed and existing cross sections
- Proposed Windows and doors
- Photographic survey
- Design and Access Statement
- Heritage Impact Assessment
- Structural Survey
- Ecology Report (bats and birds) including method statement, RAMs and mitigation proposals
- Conservation Method Statement
- Hard and soft landscaping and planting scheme, including boundary treatment plan.

**Views of Officer**

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Principle of development and design

The site is located within the settlement limit of Holt, where the change of use to residential is considered acceptable in principle, subject to compliance with UPD Policy GDP1.

Care should be taken when designing the private outdoor space to ensure that any necessary boundary / screening treatments do not detrimentally impact upon the setting of the listed building or character and appearance of the conservation area.

Consideration should also be given to the need for obscure glazing on key elevations where new habitable rooms might otherwise lead to the overlooking of the surrounding dwellings, resulting in a loss of privacy. Minimum separation distances are set out on LPGN No. 21.

Principle of Conversion of the Listed Former Chapel

It is likely that there will be some acceptance of change, given that it is unlikely to be used as a place of worship again. However, any changes would need to be strictly justified as being necessary to preserve the special interest of the listed building. In the conversion of buildings such as this, often the open spaces are a critical element of their special character and being the main purpose and focus of their construction in the first place. Subdividing can cause harm and impact on the ability to understand and appreciate such buildings.

These early proposals look positive in retaining the open space at ground floor level and then introducing two pods, linked by a bridge and suspended on columns at first floor. This allows much of the open aspect of the church to be retained, and also positively avoids awkward subdivisions across the nave windows by insetting the first floor pods away from the external walls.

Whilst the scheme has potential, I note that the list description makes reference to the interior being fairly complete and the photographs of the interior, whilst identified as being "earlier" show this to be true. Pews, pulpits, wall plaques, paintings, organs etc. are all key elements of a churches architectural composition and so it is imperative that any further design work takes this into consideration and retains these important features wherever possible.

Prior to providing more detailed comment, access to the building is therefore required to provide us with the opportunity to view inside and take some up to date photographs of the interior, to help understand how it has changed and what is remaining. Photographs should also be provided of the school room section which is also part of the designation. I also strongly recommend that Heritage Statement is produced as early as possible; this should clearly analyse and identify the buildings significance which in turn should be used to help inform on-going design.

Trees and Ecology

There are at least four trees within the boundary of property, which should be a material consideration to development. It will be necessary for any application to be accompanied by an arboricultural report undertaken by a qualified, competent arborist in accordance with BS5837:2012 'Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction'.

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The installation of the proposed driveway and parking bays to the rear may come into conflict with the existing trees to the rear. Should both trees be considered worthy of retention then it may be advisable for the report to include an Impact Assessment to gauge any likelihood of root damage and soil compaction by construction etc. and any future ground disturbance to finished hard surfacing as a result of radial root growth and expansion beneath the driveway.

To comply with policy EC6, an ecology report would be required in support of any formal applications in respect of the bats and breeding birds, in and around the building, carried out at an appropriate time of year by a licenced ecologist.

Welsh Government Planning Policy Wales and subsequent letter to LPAs requires development to provide a net benefit for biodiversity (NBB) i.e. a better outcome than if the site was left undeveloped.

Highways matters
I have consulted the highway authority and attached the response. Provided the matters raised can be address, I have no concerns in relation to the ability to secure safe and satisfactory means of access to the site, and parking/turning, to support the proposed residential use.

**Conclusion**

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. Some of the information required to support the applications will be relevant to one or more of the above issues. Where reports/surveys etc. are to be submitted, a cross reference to them and a brief summary of how their findings have influenced the design of the site is will be needed in the Design and Access Statement.

There are a number of factors to be considered in order to respect the architectural interest and integrity of the listed building. I would therefore recommend early consultation on any further detailed proposals, and I suggest that we meet, together with the conservation officer, on site to discuss the internal arrangement of the building.

I trust the above is of assistance. However please note that this advice is given without prejudice to any formal decision of the Council. The validity of the advice may also degrade over time owing to changes in national or local planning policies.

Yours faithfully,



David Fitzsimon
Prif Swyddog Yr Economi a Chynllunio
Chief Officer Economy and Planning

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