P /2015 /0469

Design and Access Statement
Proposed conversion of Pont y Blew Methodist Chapel,

Introduction

This design and access statement accompanies an application for conversion of the redundant Methodist Chapel, Pont y Blew, to a modest 3-bedroom dwelling, with a net floor area of approximately 80 sq m.

The Chapel is built of galvanized corrugated iron and is typical of a 'kit-building' popularized during the C.19 and early C.20. At the time, such buildings were 'cutting-edge'; nowadays they are a much undervalued part of the heritage of the built environment.

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Nick Thompson, "Corrugated Iron Buildings – Shining publications", notes that,

"they brought character, charm and a lively sense of modernity…painted in red, green or pink, they introduced new building techniques and innovative forms….these pioneering prefabricated structures tell a small part of the history of building construction and there remains a surprising affection for the last of the tin tabernacles"

The application building survives in its original format, albeit double doors have been introduced at the rear and an external brick chimney has been added to the south-west elevation, albeit it is now reduced in size and has been capped.

A structural assessment is attached, together with a method statement outlining how the conversion can take place.

Use

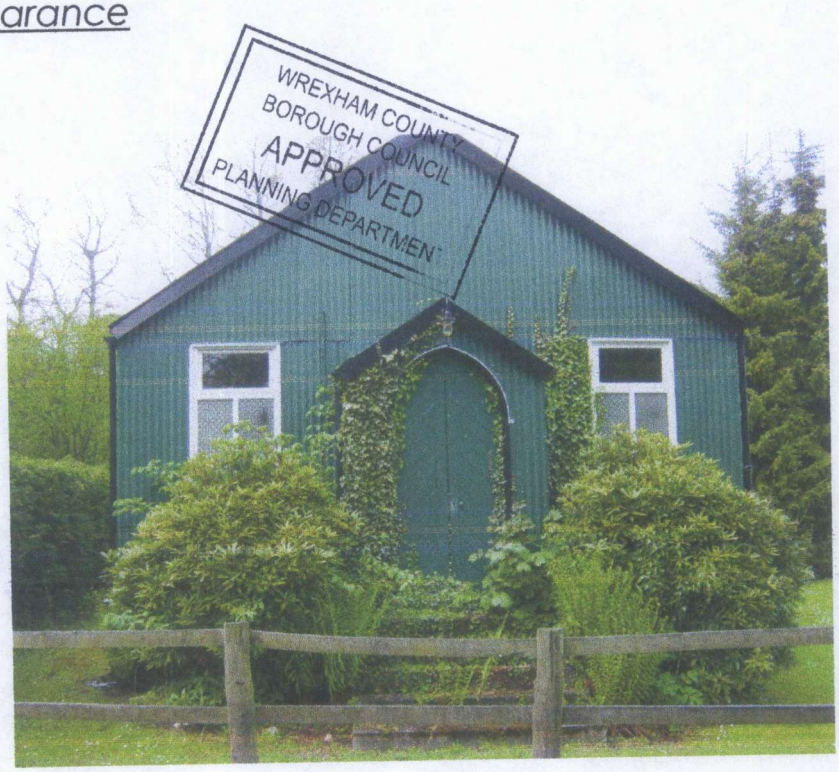
The building has long ceased to be used as a place of worship and was purchased by the owner of the adjacent property in approximately 1980, when it's curtilage was annexed as domestic garden and the building was used as ancillary domestic storage. This use has been continuous ever since.



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Character/appearance

The building derives its character from the use of corrugated iron and its traditional chapel appearance - with a prominent gable, porch and simple fenestration.



For this reason we have designed the conversion so that the rooms and internal spaces work within the constraints of the original openings. This ensures that the external appearance is largely unchanged and the building retains its presence as an important element within the rural scene. We are also reinstating the rear elevation to its original appearance and removing the later external chimney.

Internally the original ornate trusses survive and are to be incorporated within the, largely full-height interior.

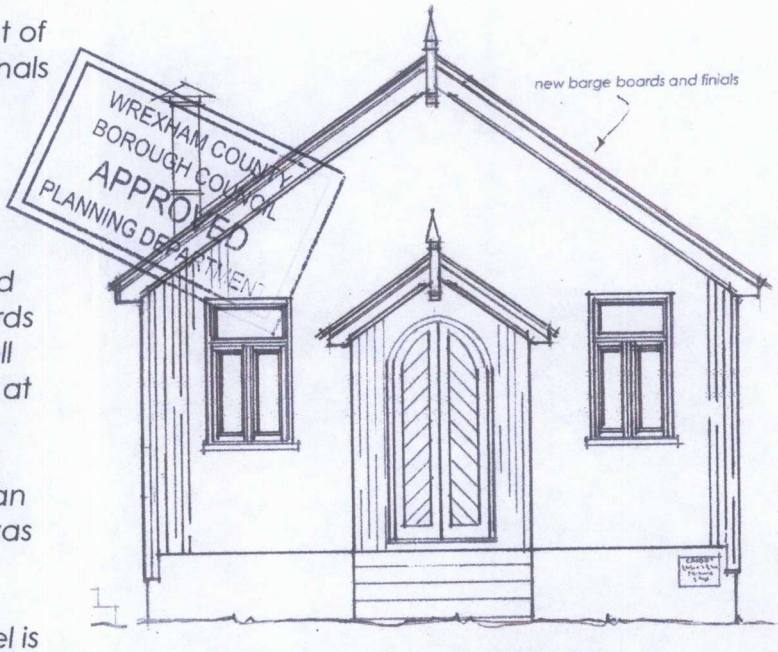


Within the site it is proposed to undertake simple landscaping. The existing lawns, indigenous trees and shrubs are all to be retained. Hard-surfacing for the drive/parking area will be natural plain 20mm gravel.

As the building will be required to achieve a good standard of energy efficiency, it is proposed to replace the existing windows with items that will take double glazed units. The proposed windows will be purpose-made timber to the same pattern as the existing, with the existing round timber architraves retained.

The other main changes to the exterior are:

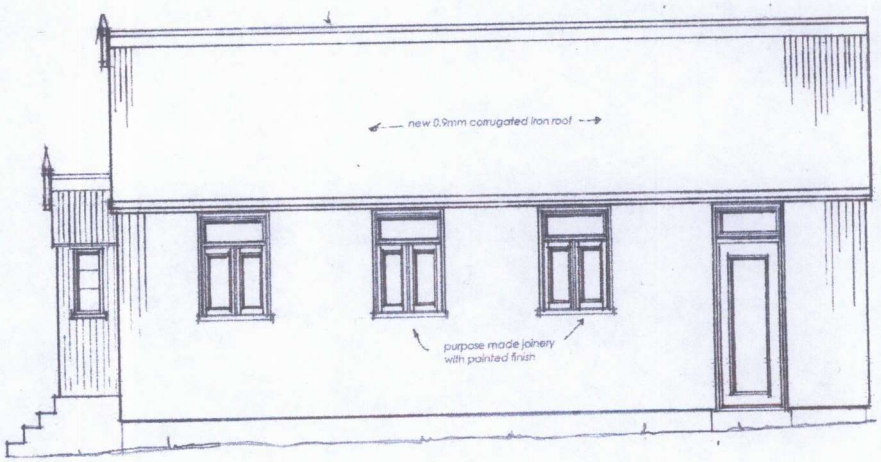
1. - the proposed replacement of the barge boards, as the originals have at some stage been removed.



Following research into corrugated iron buildings, it is apparent that many displayed ornate decorative bargeboards with finials, crosses or even bell towers prominently displayed at the front of the gables. These buildings were manufactured during the Victorian/Edwardian period when such detailing was commonplace.

Because this particular chapel is fairly simple and low key, we are proposing simple barge boards 200 x 25 mm with deep chamfers and stops, moulding to the upper part of the bargeboard; and simple finials. This will provide accurate, well-informed substance to the front elevation.

2. – the replacement of one window with a door....this will be undertaken sensitively, retaining the top light to match the remaining windows. The siting of the door in this location will allow ready access to the garden/parking area and is seen as a 'trade-off' for reinstating the north-west and



south-west elevations.

Externally the green corrugated iron wall sheets are in excellent condition and are to be retained. The roof sheets are not so good and will be replaced by prime quality 0.9mm galvanized sheeting (this is the same quality as that used by, for example, the heritage railway trusts for restoring tin railway buildings). The roof will be painted, possibly red...or green to match the walls. The ridge sheets will be of the roll-top design.

For the gutters, it is likely that Lindab galvanized or powder coated units will be used....whilst these are fairly contemporary; they suit this type of building in terms of appearance and rugged functionality. (see photo attached showing their use with a tin roof on a conversion)

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Accessibility

Disabled access will be achieved by providing a smooth firm path to the side door, which will incorporate a flush threshold for easy access. The path will be level and firm, constructed of slabs. There will be a wc/shower room at ground floor level and 2 shallow internal steps separating the front and rear of the building, allowing relative ease of access.

Environmental sustainability

The proposed dwelling will be constructed to achieve target U values which will be well within the minimum required by the current Building Regulations.

The walls and ceilings will be insulated to achieve low heat loss and this will be combined with efficient heat-reflecting windows (planitherm) together with a good standard of solar gain through the multiple openings within the main living area. Sustainable heating will consist of a clearview stove with water heating. These measures will achieve low carbon emissions (target A)

Vehicle hardstandings will be constructed of gravel laid upon a porous membrane on crushed hardcore to prevent surface water run-off. Water-butts attached to each down-pipe will recycle water for garden/outside use.

The existing outbuildings will be retained and will provide log-storage together with secure cycle-storage.

Foul drainage will be via a sewage treatment unit which will allow clean discharge directly to the watercourse adjacent to the site.

Planning Policy

Planning policy H3 of the Wrexham UDP allows the change of use or conversion of a building to residential use outside settlement limits.

The policy states that conversions will only be permitted where:-

a) in the case of agricultural buildings, there is no longer an agricultural need and alternative non-residential uses have proved inappropriate; ***– this is not required as the building is not agricultural***

and b) the building is structurally sound and capable of conversion without extensive rebuilding tantamount to the erection of a new dwelling; ***- see attached structural assessment***

and c) any inherent characteristics of merit in the building are retained; ***- the proposed plans take account of this***

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and d) the proposed dwelling and the resulting curtilage does not constitute an undesirable intrusion into the landscape, create access problems, nor require the provision of services at public cost; ***- the curtilage is already part of the adjacent house curtilage and will not result in additional visual impact upon the rural setting; clear visibility and parking is available on the site; the site has mains electric and water; private foul drainage will be installed***

and e) the floor plan of the existing building is sufficient to create a habitable dwelling. – ***the building will provide a comfortable, modest 3- bedroom dwelling***

Movement to from and within the development

Parking for 2 vehicles per dwelling can be provided, ensuring that the Council's maximum Parking standards are met.

Community safety

There are no community safety implications with this application.

Further comments

Previous pre-application submissions were undertaken in 2003 and 2004 and in each case the Planning Officer concerned, recommended that the building is of architectural and historic interest, which, in principle, warranted conversion to a residential use. The former enquiry referenced the Glyndwr Local Plan, which has of course been superseded by the Wrexham UDP, however the latter enquiry considered the proposal against the current policy H3, which by that time had come into force.

With respect to ***TAN15 and flood risk****, we have checked the flood risk plans and the building is entirely clear of flooding (being located in a white zone = little or no risk of flooding). A small area of garden to the north of the plot is shown as*

yellow (= areas known to have been flooded in the past). There are two comments to make regarding this;

1 – Dr Seward has lived at Grove House for 40 years and in this time, he can confirm that this part of the garden has **never been subject to flooding.** The field at the rear of this part of the garden is lower than the garden itself and during the most serious prolonged rainfall, this has acted as a sump to surface water run-off (not river flood water. Water has always been completely contained within the land at the rear and subsequently it has run off or soaked away.

2 – The Chapel is an elevated building. The floor level of the Chapel is 800mm off ground level at the front (lane-side elevation) and approximately 300mm above ground level at the rear.

Conclusion

The proposed scheme of conversion fully meets the requirements of policy H3 of the Wrexham UDP; Highway standards; will not be adversely affected by flooding and will bring into use a building of considerable charm, and of architectural and local historic significance.

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Appendices

Flood risk map

Photo showing new 0.9 galvanized sheeting with Lindab galvanized gutters on a conversion