Design, Access & Heritage Statement for proposed demolitions, alterations and additions

Epworth Lodge, Grove Road, Wrexham



Revision B

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Introduction

This Design, Access and heritage Impact statement is written in relation to the property known as Epworth Lodge in Wrexham.

This application seeks to gain consent for the removal of a late 20thC conservatory, 20thC lean-to extension, internal reordering of kitchen and conversion of garage outbuilding to form ancillary residential accommodation to the main dwelling.

All proposals contained within this application have been considered against the NPPF and local planning policy.

Setting and Location

Epworth Lodge is situated on the northern side of Grove Road in Wrexham. It is approximately ½ a mile north of the main town centre and in a residential area established in the mid 19thC.

Grove Road is located within the central 'Grosvenor Road' designated conservation area.



Excerpt from the 1872 ordnance survey map for the area with Epworth lodge highlighted.



Aerial screenshot of satellite map 2018 showing location of Epworth Lodge.

Historic overview

Epworth Lodge was constructed in 1865 as a manse to Bryn y Ffynnon Methodist church. It is built primarily of random (presumably Cefn) rubblestone beneath coped gables and blue welsh slate roof coverings. It is believed that the design is attributable to one of the Gummow family (likely JR Gummow), the local and well reputed family of architects from Wrexham and Shrewsbury responsible for various works to country houses and cathedrals in the local area. Their style was a curious blend of either classical ionic or rococo Gothick, which would correlate with this well executed piece of asymmetric design.

As with many 19thC residences, the majority of its fabric and layout has not escaped unaltered. To the rear elevation it is quite clear that a reasonable degree of re-ordering has occurred, most of which seems to have happened in the 20thC. The same can be said of the interior, which can presumably be associated with its lapse in use as a Methodist manse and transformation into a dwelling once again. Given that listing protection did not occur until the mid-1990's, it is clear to see why little written evidence exists of the changes made.

The outbuilding, whilst traditional in the sense of its street frontage rubblestone elevation, is clearly of mid to late 20thC in date. It is principally constructed of blockwork with formalised stonework to the front elevation as mentioned, and faux rubblestone style render (presumably cementitious) to the other garden facing elevations. The roof is of natural blue slate with capped angle hips and ridge. Windows and doors are of poor quality painted timber casement. Internally, the front half forms the garage with the rear half being lined and floored for residential purposes; the roof structure is of simple prefab truss construction with partitions of blockwork.

An excerpt of the CADW listing description can be read as follows:

> *Epworth Lodge*
>
> *Listing date 31 January 1994 - Grade II*

CADW, source ID 1836

Rhosddu, Wrexham, Denbighshire (Domestic)

Built as manse to Bryn y Ffynnon Methodist Church in 1865 but now a private house.

Random rubble with ashlar dressings and slate roof. 2 storeys, L-plan with central entrance hall, employing a picturesque asymmetrical domestic gothic style. Hipped roofed porch in angle of the 2 ranges to the front, with shouldered arch to doorway. Advanced coped gabled range to the right has squared bay window to ground floor, with pointed arched mullioned lights and lean-to roof, and 3-light window above, with shafts as mullions. 2 narrow shouldered windows in left hand range, and trefoiled window over porch. This range faces SW, with canted bay window with shoulded mullioned lights to ground floor, and 3-light window with shouldered shafts as mullions beneath coped gable above. Rear of this range has gable facing garden, with shouldered mullioned windows in gable end and side wall, and stack on corner of gable. Late C20 conservatory projects from ground floor. Continuation of gabled wing also advanced to rear. Continuous string course to principal elevations, and moulded stone brackets to oversailing eaves. Axial stack and end wall stacks in this wing, and axial stack in SW wing, all with moulded caps.

Part of an important group of late C19 villas, which together form a good example of urban estate development.

Background to application

Since moving to Epworth Lodge in 2015, it has been necessary to undertake several repair projects, namely the roof, rainwater goods, chimneys and high-level masonry – as well as the boundary walls, entrance piers and a myriad of tasks; all of which have been completed to an excellent standard.

Having now lived in the house for a number of years, it has been possible for the applicants to resolve the final stages of the project – namely the rear of the main house, the outbuilding and the garden. This principally revolves around the function and relationship of spaces to the 'family' side of the house, and the all-too-common quandary of kitchens and their relationship to the garden etc.

Pre-application consultation was undertaken with the conservation officer, Anna Irwin, in March of 2018. All aspects of the scheme contained within this application were shown on site to which no formal objections were raised; this was closely followed by a formal planning and LBC application – which was approved, albeit now lapsed. This application is essentially a 'pared back' resubmission of the formerly approved scheme.

Proposed scheme

Given that the contents of the previous approved application are to be heavily amended, it is sensible to outline the key items now seeking permission. Firstly to the main house:

- To demolish the current conservatory building. This will then require making good to the rear elevation. The opportunity will also be taken to replace the current kitchen window and block up the former door.
- To demolish the lean-to building. This will remove a later addition that offers no architectural merit to the house and will allow more of the original form to be appreciated visually.
- Internally, the kitchen will be reordered and in the side of the existing room – a new partition formed to create a new downstairs wash/shower room. This will also require an additional conservation rooflight, set just below the existing rooflight.
- In the kitchen, it is proposed to remove the current fit-out and lining to the fireplace and recess the cooker further in, creating more usable space within the kitchen. The current easternmost

window will then have its cill lowered to floor level to create a new pair of French doors to the garden- again a much needed to improve the relationship between the house and its garden.
- It is thought that the above works to the main house are the lowest impact way of achieving a lighter, more spacious kitchen which better integrates with the dining room and garden, whilst also providing the much needed service bathroom to the rear – with a much needed upgrade to the thermal efficiency and draught control in this part of the house. All materials have been chosen to be complimentary and of good quality.

The outbuilding will receive numerous external changes to facilitate its full conversion for domestic ancillary use as accommodation. This is comprised of:

- Insertion of conservation rooflights to the roofscape of the outbuilding to both NE and SW facing roof pitches.
- A new wood burner installed to the outbuilding
- In order to provide the necessary thermal upgrade and improve the external aesthetic, it is proposed to clad in square edged timber weatherboarding, left exposed to weather naturally. Insulation will be applied internally.
- Windows and doors will be of simple casement design, either painted timber with double glazing or thermally broken aluminium.
- Internally, the current playroom will remain in current form as a home office / artists studio with the front section being retained as a garage come workshop.
- The above works to the outbuilding will not only allow it to provide a more useful function to Epworth lodge but also to enhance its somewhat dour aesthetics in a more contemporary manner that is still subservient to the language of the main house.

In addition to the above, two new structures are also proposed – see separate drawings for information on their size and appearance. These consist of a new Victorian style metal and glass greenhouse (atop traditional brick plinth) located in the rear corner of the garden – accompanied by a modest lean-to potting shed, open fronted and constructed of timber with cladding and a black metal roof.

These simple domestic structures will be located in sensible/discreet positions as indicated and provide much needed storage/infrastructure for the enjoyment of the garden.

Heritage Impact assessment

Taking the proposals above into account, the following principles and guidelines will be followed for the duration of the building works:

a) A very careful mechanical and electrical strategy will be developed in order to ensure there is a minimal amount of impact on the historic asset for its alterations.

b) All historic fabric, features and fixtures will be built/scribed around to ensure that there is no loss of historic fabric or anything which may adversely affect future interpretations of the structure.

c) All other proposals i.e. new partitions, reordering etc are considered subservient and will not detrimentally or irreversibly affect the historic fabric of the building in a non-reversible manner.

d) All works proposed have been developed with NPPF policy PPS5, and the considered good principles of conservation referred to by ICOMOS and the Burra Charter.

e) All historic fabric is to be fully recorded in a hybrid of digital photography and measured drawings. Any fabric unearthed or uncovered during the proposed works will be carefully revealed and fully recorded before proceeding.

Ecology

No roof spaces or structures are proposed to be disturbed by the proposals within this application, therefore no Ecological assessment has been commissioned.

Access

No changes are principally proposed to the access of the dwelling. Access will be stepped to both front and rear door entrances to the existing outbuilding, with small steps also being present due to levels to the new side and French door entrances to the main house.

Photographic appendix

Please see below for photographs as existing, for the relevant areas of the property.



View of SE and NE elevations of garage outbuilding



View of NE and NW elevations of the garage outbuilding



View of northernmost rooms, already converted for residential purposes previously



View of southernmost garage area, currently used as residential store



View of NW elevation and later 20thC lean to extension



View of NW elevation showing modern uPVC conservatory and lean-to extension in context.



General view of garden (rear) elevation showing conservatory.



General view of conservatory in relation to rear elevation.



View of current kitchen window opening with 20thC casement, to become French doors with external canopy.



View of kitchen fireplace recess with cooker, to be altered.



View of current kitchen, note tall casement window by sink to become French doors.



View toward side passage doorway providing access to conservatory, to be infilled.