Planning Department
Wrexham County Borough Council
Rhosddu Road
Wrexham
LL11 1AU

Comisiwn Brenhinol
Henebion Cymru
Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales

1 April 2025

FAO Sarah Duckworth

RE: P/2025/0206. Former Presbyterian Church, Castle Street, Holt. *Listed building consent for internal and external alterations including demolition of extension*

Thank you for consulting us on the plans for the former Presbyterian Church at Castle Street, Holt, application number P/2025/0206. The remit of the Royal Commission permits us to comment only on the historical significance and context of a monument or structure and on the adequacy or otherwise of the record.

The first Park English Presbyterian Chapel was built in 1843, was registered for solomnising marriages on 20th April 1850, and in the 1851 Religious Census was described by minister Ebenezer Powell: 'This is one of the Home Mission Stations of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists. All the services are carried on in the English language.' The same census recorded that there were 110 free sittings and 90 other. In 1864, the Rev Powell decided that a new chapel was required, and with the support of the Marquis of Westminster, the architect Thomas M. Lockwood of Chester was employed to draw up plans and specifications, and an advert for tenders for the building of the chapel put out. The foundation stone of the new chapel was laid in 1865 by Robert A. MacFie Esq. of Liverpool. According to the Holt Historical Society, the chapel opened in Christmas Day 1865, the total cost including hymn books and harmonium being £1,600 and £960 having been raised. This new chapel first appears on OS 25-inch First Edition (1870–75).

The chapel is built of roughly coursed sandstone blocks in the Gothic style with a gable-entry plan on to Castle Street. The façade has a central entrance porch, also gabled, containing a pointed arch doorway with decorative foliate capitals and a quatrefoil, stained glass, light above the door, a pair of narrow, cup-headed windows to either side elevation. Above, two pairs of windows with trefoil heads, central stone bar with foliate decoration and central cinquefoil lights with triangular arch surrounds. Between is a smaller, single light version. To the apex of the elevation is a pointed arch louvre with scalloped decoration. On the left corner (from street view) is a spire with open belfry section, decorated with stepped buttresses and trefoil carvings. The side elevations have further pairs of trefoil headed windows, and a central gables with taller windows and corner buttresses. The rear school room is also of sandstone, with simpler lancet windows.

The RCCEORBWM of 1905 recorded that the chapel seated 320 and the Sunday School 200 and the value was £2,000. The chapel was further modified in the late nineteenth and the

late twentieth century but the present structure is substantially that of 1865. The chapel was put onto the market towards the end of 2022 after closing for worship.

We previously made comments on proposals for the Presbyterian Church at Holt (24 July 2024, case number P/2024/1186) regarding internal and external alterations. In this current application (P/2025/0206) we would re-iterate our previous comments, highlighting the regrettable loss of the pews, and to mitigate against these changes with a **Level 3 photographic survey** as a condition of consent. This level of photographic survey is detailed in section 5 (p.26) of Historic England's *Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice* (2016). Digital copies of the resulting survey photographs should then be deposited with the National Monuments Record of Wales in Aberystwyth. Photographs are to be TIFF formatted and 300dpi.

Yn gywir / Yours sincerely

Meilyr Powel

Investigator (Historic Buildings). **Email:** planning@rcahmw.gov.uk