CHAIN BANK, CHIRK WREXHAM



DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT FOR PROPOSED NEW SUMMERHOUSE
INCLUDING HERITAGE IMPACT STATEMENT

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I. INTRODUCTION

This document is produced in support of an application for Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent for a new summerhouse in the south-west corner of the garden. The existing house is an Arts and Crafts design situated within the Chirk Conservation Area, and subject to an Article 4(2) Direction. It is also within the buffer zone of the Pontycyllte Aqueduct, part of the Llangollen Canal World Heritage Site. The ground within the property boundary slopes steeply down to the south, Outside the boundary on the west side there is a public footpath leading to the Chirk Aqueduct which is in constant use by visitors to the Heritage Site.

2. OBJECTIVE

Mr. Richards purchased the house in 2021 in order to provide accommodation and home care for his father-in-law, Kevin, and was in consultation with the then Conservation Officer, Ms Kathryn Moore over the alterations required. The deck and garage received Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent in 2022 (CHI P/2022/0038) and are now completed.

Mr Richards had a long-term aim to erect a summerhouse in the garden once the alterations to the house and the deck and garage were completed. This would give him a private office space for occasional use and double up as additional accommodation for family members when they come to visit. At present they stay in a caravan on the front drive, which is not ideal; bedrooms on the east of the first floor have been converted into a flat for Kevin with access via a hydraulic lift in the kitchen, so there is limited space now for family visitors. The summerhouse would also be a pleasant place from which to view the canal. I prepared a draft design which he submitted for pre-application advice, and he received the advice on February 20th, 2025. This contained some helpful references to Wrexham planning policies and guidance, and I have referred to these in preparing this DA Statement.

3. DESIGN

The design was developed in collaboration with Mr Richards as he intends to construct the building himself. It is based on similar cabins which are commercially available locally, such as those at the Lady Margaret' Park over the tunnel (below).



We decided on vertical timber cladding, using recycled planks, and a pitched roof to be in keeping with the other outbuildings on the site. The roof will be clad in steel profile sheets to reduce the weight of the structure. The balustrading to the surrounding deck will match the new glass balustrading to the deck around the house.

Although this is a summerhouse it will be insulated to domestic standards as it is likely to be in use during the winter. If heating is required during the winter months, portable electric heaters would be the simplest solution. It may be feasible to install solar pv panels on the south slope of the roof, but that would need a cost benefit assessment to see if enough electricity could be generated, given the number of trees in this part of the garden, so we are not suggesting this at present.

We were concerned about the impact of any building on the roots of the copper beech tree, which will extend to the edge of the canopy, and so the cabin is situated well away from the canopy. As the ground slopes down towards the south-west corner of the site, we decided to build the cabin on stilts. This will minimise any impact on tree roots and also allow free access below for wildlife.

The septic tank in use by the house drainage system is close to the site of the summerhouse, and a connection will be relatively easy to make.

4. SITE

As noted on the Design and Access Statement for the previous planning application, the garden to the south is very overgrown, with self-seeded trees competing with some planted mature species. Mr Richards has been in discussion with the Llangollen Canal Trust in relation to thinning the trees on both sides of his boundary – something that the Trust will welcome. There is a separate planning application relating to the removal and management of trees within the garden, discussed with the Wrexham Council Arboriculture Officer, Jon Brewin (reference P/2022/0055) and granted on 9th March 2022. Two leylandii trees have already been felled (see below) but the spruce which Mr Richards had intended to keep was blown down in the January 2025 gale.





The existing western boundary of the site is mainly scrub, and is not in good condition. Approximately 70m of new beech hedge is already planned to be planted along the western boundary, by the garage, replacing the existing scrub. The lower part of the boundary will be a mixture of native trees such as hazel, hawthorn and hornbeam. It will be kept to a height of 2 metres, high enough to give some screening from the Pontcysyllte site, but not so high as to be unmanageable. It will be

important to maintain a view from the summerhouse to the canal, but at the same time also to screen the building to minimise its visual impact on the World Heritage Site.





5. HERITAGE IMPACT STATEMENT

5.1 Pontycyllte World Heritage Site

As noted on the previous D and A statement, a photograph taken soon after the house was built shows the open view to the aqueduct, now a World Heritage Site. The aqueduct, viaduct and tunnel are all Grade II* listed and are a major tourist attraction, reached from Castle Road by a footpath along the outside of the western boundary to Chirk Bank. The house itself was oriented to maximise the view of the aqueduct and viaduct, as shown in an early photograph of the garden viewed from the house. The house would have been clearly visible from the aqueduct, and the path at that time, but since then both the garden trees and the trees bordering the path have matured, and the house cannot now be seen at all from the aqueduct and very little from the path. The proposed thinning of some of the trees will allow glimpses from the house. The south elevation of the house is not currently visible from the World Heritage Site nor from the path leading to it from Castle Road, and will not be visible even when the garden trees are thinned. There may be glimpses of the summerhouse from the canal footpath especially in the winter months, but we do not believe that this will have any significant impact on visitors' enjoyment of the canal and aqueduct.

5.2 Chirk Conservation Area

Chain Bank is specifically mentioned in the adopted Chirk Conservation Area Assessment (p.16)

> "2.24 Bryn Coed and Chain Bank on Castle Road, Chirk Council Offices on Holyhead Road and Whitewalls on Station Road are all excellent, early 20th Century examples of differing revival styles of architecture within the Conservation Area…. Bryn Coed was built in 1912 by Shayler and Ridge for A. Wood, a manager at Brynkinallt Colliery in the Restoration revival style and is notable for its symmetrical composition and detailing. Whitewalls and Chain Bank are of later date and have been designed in a vernacular revival style reminiscent of the Arts and Crafts Movement of the late 19th Century. Their carefully considered detailing and fenestration make them particularly distinctive within the Conservation Area."
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> 4.56 To the west of the public footpath leading to the canal is Chain Bank, another early 20th Century property of Arts and Crafts style. The building, set at

> the top of the northern slope of the Ceiriog Valley, is of high architectural value to the Conservation Area, retaining much of its original character and having group value with the other Arts and Crafts influenced buildings of Whitewalls, Ty Ririd and Glyn Wylfa. Of particular note are the original leaded windows, elegant bowed window to the western elevation, tall, brick chimney stacks and sprocketed, Westmorland slate roof. The garden of the property, which follows the steep slope of the valley, also contains some fine trees including a copper beech which adds variety of colour to wider views during the summer months."

As noted above, we have taken pains to minimise any impact on the copper beech tree.

6. PHOTOGRAPHS



Photograph of the aqueduct and viaduct from the house, c.1930





Views from the aqueduct and path, 1/2/22. Adjoining modern properties are visible, but Chain Bank is completely hidden behind the trees



New path and steps to terrace



Existing brick surround, new lamp post



Existing brick path



Existing hedge on north boundary