

Heritage Impact Statement

Application for a replacement dwelling at Chapel Farm

At

Chapel Farm, Newbridge Road, Newbridge, Cefn Mawr,
Wrexham, LL14 3JA

On behalf of

Mr and Mrs Edwards

Prepared by:

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Heritage Impact Statement (HIA) has been prepared on behalf of Mr and Mrs Edwards by Fisher German LLP and submitted in support of an application for a replacement farmhouse at Chapel Farm, Newbridge.
- 1.2 The purpose of the assessment is to describe the significance of nearby heritage assets. The information will subsequently highlight any impact of the proposal on the significance of the assets, and if required identify mitigating measures where necessary to address impact.
- 1.3 This statement should be read in conjunction with other supporting information supplied as part of the Planning Application.

2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1 Chapel Farm is located off Newbridge Road, Newbridge, on the outskirts of Cefn Mawr, in the administrative boundary of Wrexham County Borough Council.
- 2.2 The application site can be seen below (figure 1), the property currently is a 3-storey farmhouse which has been left redundant for in excess of 12 years and is seeking replacement for a new two-storey farmhouse with accompanying garaging.



Figure 1. Aerial view of Chapel Farm (Google Earth).

- 2.3 The site is not located within any Conservation Areas, the site does just lie within the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site Buffer Zone. There are no Tree Preservation Orders on the site.
- 2.4 The proposals are detailed in the Planning Statement submitted with the application.
- 2.5 External photographs of the buildings current redundant condition have been submitted.

3.0 IDENTIFIED HERITAGE ASSETS

- 3.1 The farmhouse is not listed, however there are heritage assets in proximity to the building:
- Cefn Bychan Baptist Chapel- Grade II Listed
 - Railway Viaduct over River Dee- Grade II* Listed
 - Cefn (Newbridge) Viaduct- Grade II* Listed
- 3.2 Chapel Farm is not located within the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site but is just located within the Buffer Zone.
- 3.3 The World Heritage Site was designated in 2009 and the wider Buffer Zone is a wide geographical area, encompassing 4,000ha within the Dee and Ceiriog Valleys. The Buffer Zone has been designated to help protect the World Heritage Site's essential setting. The Buffer Zone is a material consideration when determining planning applications.
- 3.4 Figure 2 provides an indication of location of these heritage assets in relation to Chapel Farm. To assist understanding figure 2:
- Blue dots- Listed Building
 - Red arrow- Farmhouse to be demolished and replaced

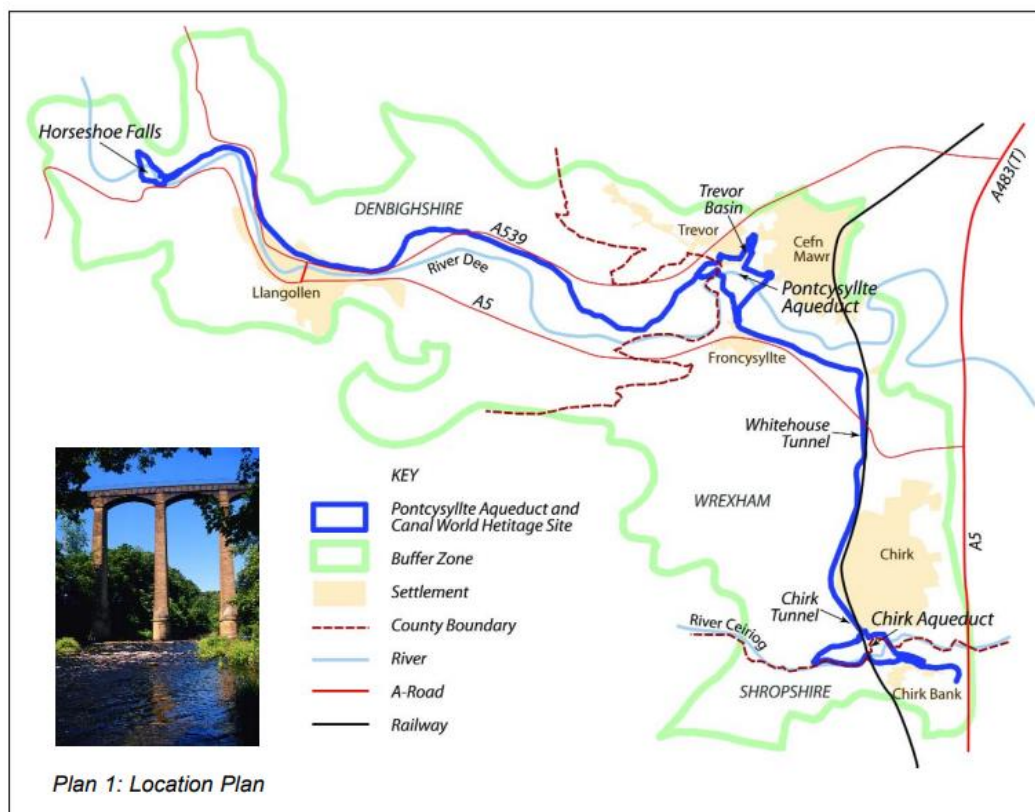


Figure 2. Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site Boundaries (Denbighshire Council).



Figure 3. Heritage assets within the vicinity of the site (Cadw).



Figure 4. Chapel Farm 1888-1913 Maps (National Library of Scotland).

- 3.5 The site is located outside Clwydian Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the Special Landscape Area.

4.0 THE SITE AND RELATIONSHIP WITH THESE HERITAGE ASSETS

- 4.1 The house which forms the proposal is currently a redundant farmhouse at Chapel Farm. The farmhouse is uninhabitable and therefore forms the basis of the application for demolition and to be replaced with a new farmhouse.
- 4.2 The current building sits within the centre of the farmyard and is three-storeys high (but only appears two-storey from the roadside). Historic maps show the farmhouse plotted on the 1888-1913 maps as shown in figure 4.
- 4.3 The closest heritage asset to the farmhouse is the neighbouring Grade II Listed Cefn Bychan Baptist Chapel. Although neighbouring, the Chapel (which now has planning consent to be converted into a dwelling) cannot be seen from the Chapel Farm due to the well-established screening of trees. Figure 5 shows the chapel cannot be seen from Chapel Farmstead, and figure 6 shows how on Newbridge Road the heritage asset and Chapel Farmhouse cannot be seen from one another.



Figure 5. Demonstrating that the neighbouring Grade II Listed Chapel cannot be seen from the site.



Figure 6. Photograph taken on Newbridge Road showing how the two buildings cannot be seen from one another. The photograph also shows how the current buildings condition impacts the road negatively.

- 4.4 Figure 6 also demonstrates how the current redundant dwelling does not create a positive or aesthetically pleasing street scene on Newbridge Road.



Figure 7. Photograph taking from the front door of the current building, demonstrating the distance from the Grade II* Listed Viaduct.

- 4.5 The viaduct is located a distance away from the farmhouse. Figure 7 provides a photograph which was taken from the front door of the current redundant dwelling looking out. It demonstrates the distance between the two structures and that a new replacement farmhouse would have minimal impact on the Grade II* heritage asset due to large distance between.
- 4.6 The proposed plans show how elements of the new build are paying respect to the current building, no openings are proposed on the rear elevation on Newbridge Road and the same number of openings proposed on the side elevations. If anything, a replacement building will improve the setting of the viaduct and the key views from this impressive architectural structure.
- 4.7 The stable block located closest to the boundary line with Cefn Bychan Baptist Chapel is proposed for removal and the proposed attached garage to the farmhouse shall be sited in its place. The height of this garage will not be too different to the current stable block there today. The proposed change here will not be seen from the Chapel, therefore minimal impact is had to this asset.

- 4.8 There are no changes proposed to the farmyard, and the existing buildings which are utilised will be retained and unchanged. Chapel Farm is still very much active and only lacking a farmhouse for occupants to reside here. The character of the wider area will overall be improved by having a habitable dwelling of architectural merit.
- 4.9 It is noted that views which will be impacted from the viaduct will be positive impacts. The overall setting will be enhanced positively.

5.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

- 5.1 Under Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 local authorities must consider the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings when assessing applications.

'In considering whether to grant permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses'

- 5.2 The Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016 enables Welsh authorities to give more effective protection to the historic environment by further improving procedures for its sustainable management and to provide transparency in decision making.
- 5.3 This can be read in conjunction with National guidance is within Planning Policy Wales (PPW) 2021 and Technical Advice Note (TAN) 24: The Historic Environment.
- 5.4 Chapter 6 of PPW relates to The Historic Environment. Paragraph 6.1.6 of PPW sets out the Welsh Government's specific objectives for the historic environment to seek:
- protect the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Sites;
 - conserve archaeological remains, both for their own sake and for their role in education, leisure and the economy;
 - safeguard the character of historic buildings and manage change so that their special architectural and historic interest is preserved;
 - preserve or enhance the character or appearance of conservation areas, whilst the same time helping them remain vibrant and prosperous;
 - preserve the special interest of sites on the register of historic parks and gardens; and
 - protect areas on the register of historic landscapes in Wales.

- 5.5 Paragraph 6.1.7 states the importance of the planning system looking to protect, conserve and enhance the significance of historic assets. This includes consideration given to the setting of an historic asset which might extend beyond its curtilage. Any change that impacts on an historic asset or its setting should be managed in a sensitive and sustainable way.
- 5.6 Paragraph 6.1.22 relates to World Heritage Sites, it states that where impacts of proposed development would be on the World Heritage Site Buffer Zone and its essential setting, is a material consideration in determination of any planning application.
- 5.7 Wales Technical Advice Note 24: Historic Environment, (October 2017), Section 7 states in 1.7 that "In policy terms, the historic environment is defined as 6:
"All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and deliberately planted or managed." A historic asset is: *"An identifiable component of the historic environment. It may consist or be a combination of an archaeological site, a historic building or area, historic park and garden or a parcel of historic landscape. Nationally important historic assets will normally be designated."* For any development within the setting of a historic asset, some of the factors to consider and weigh in the assessment include:
- *The significance of the asset and the contribution the setting makes to that significance*
 - *the prominence of the historic asset*
 - *the expected lifespan of the proposed development*
 - *the extent of tree cover and its likely longevity*
 - *non-visual factors affecting the setting of the historic asset such as noise. "*
- 5.8 Other relevant guidance is set out in The Setting of Historic Assets in Wales, Cadw (2017).
- 5.9 The Wrexham Unitary Development Plan sets out the policies for the area, with the most relevant being:
- Policy EC9- Listed Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest
- 5.10 Assessing significance is embedded in national planning policy. Heritage values contribute to a greater understanding of significance are identified by Cadw's 'Conservation Principles for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment in Wales (2011)' as being:
- Evidential
 - Historical

- Aesthetic
- Communal

5.11 There are six commonly accepted levels of significance. These are as follows: -

- Outstanding
- High
- Medium
- Low
- Neutral
- No significance

6.0 SIGNIFICANCE

6.1 Against the established criteria, the nearest heritage assets are Cefn Bychan Baptist Chapel and Railway Viaduct over River Dee and score as follows:

Evidential Value- Medium	• The neighbouring Chapel is currently undergoing works for conversion into a residential dwelling after approval has been granted. Therefore, the building is no longer in use as a Chapel, but its new use shall preserve the asset for future generations providing exemplar of religious communities of its time. • The Viaduct has undergone recent maintenance and repair work over the last 18 months to preserve the heritage asset. The asset is well preserved and has been enhanced since its work, it is an iconic impressive structure noted across Wales and an important part of local history.
Historical Value- Medium	• The Railway Viaduct is an important part of local history as well as notable history across Wales. The structure is an iconic part of the landscape within this area. • The area just lies within the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site Buffer Zone, this area contributes to the wider area's history. • The Chapel is an important example of the religious settlement and community which once was in Newbridge. • The Historical Value of these assets is closely linked to the Evidential Value.

Aesthetic Value- Medium	• The Railway Viaduct is an impressive structure, it has been given Grade II* Listed status due to the '<i>highly impressive and architecturally elegant example of mid C19 railway engineering</i>'. There are key views of the Viaduct from the whole surrounding area, the size of the structure enables it to be visible from around the AONB. • The Chapel has been given Grade II Listed status due to '<i>listed as virtually unaltered early C19 chapel of fine vernacular character</i>'. Although its important to recognise if some of this character may be lost through the conversion process. • Taken into consideration should be the aesthetic value the current farmhouse has on these heritage assets and designations. Their values are diminished due to its redundance state and neglected appearance. • Opportunity to replace with a new farmhouse will enhance the aesthetic value by placing a useable house of architectural merit.
Communal Value- Low	• The Railway Viaduct provides a functional use of serving the train line for the public. • The Chapel is no longer a community asset, therefore diminishing its communal value. • Notwithstanding both assets play a part in piecing together the local history of Newbridge and provide important architectural and historical features for the public to enjoy.

6.2 Overall, the site is of **low significance**

7.0 IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL ON THE HERITAGE ASSETS

7.1 The current farmhouse is currently redundant and has been left uninhabitable for in excess of 12 years. The state of the farmhouse has been noted by Wrexham Council and they have removed the dwelling from the council tax register as its deemed uninhabitable. The planning application for a replacement farmhouse is supported by a Building Condition Survey outlining the issues of the current redundant building today which would need to be dealt

with to bring the current back into use. Its far more sustainable to re-build the farmhouse to energy efficient, modern standards than try to rectify issues in a poor house.

- 7.2 The proposal seeks a replacement farmhouse to enable the owners to live on the farm, the owners have to visit the farm daily and living on farm will also improve security and safety of the farm. The proposed farmhouse is to be reduced from three-storey to two-storey with attached garaging to the side.
- 7.3 The current redundant state of the farmhouse is considered to be negatively impacting the setting of the nearby heritage assets.
- 7.4 Trees are proposed to be retained as part of the proposal along the boundary line with Cefn Bychan Baptist Chapel, therefore this screening between the two properties will be retained. Even if the trees were not here, a new replacement farmhouse would not impact negatively on the heritage asset and only enhance this positively.
- 7.5 Drawing no: 196/CFW/PL/002 identifies the site location plan and how the site around the dwelling will be developed. External parking which is not within the garage has been proposed away from the heritage assets, and on the side of the house which is further away from the Chapel and towards the farm access. Therefore, creating minimal impact on any changes to the setting of the heritage asset.



Figure 8. Original dwelling (Coflein).

- 7.6 In broad terms, there are only two heritage assets that are marginally impacted by the proposal, and it is considered that the new dwelling would impact on the setting of these assets positively. The proposed replacement dwelling pays respect to the current building, although many alterations and additions have been carried out to the building since its original build. Therefore, the historic element of the original building has already gone.
- 7.7 Figure 8 provides an image of the building in its original form, of which today in its current state you can clearly see it does not appear as the original form. Various additions have been made to the building over the years and removed too, including the side chimney stack and front lean to that can be seen in the photograph.
- 7.8 The proposed materials to be used as part of the build are in-keeping to what is currently used on the building. The existing stone of the current redundant farmhouse will be re-used and incorporated into the new build. Render shall be used for the upper floor and tiles shall be of natural slate.
- 7.9 The boundary wall on Newbridge Road is proposed to be re-built, repaired and retained, sourcing reclaimed material where needed.
- 7.10 When the impact of the proposal is taken as a whole, it is considered that there would be less than substantial harm to the identified heritage assets.
- 7.11 Paragraph 6.1.31 of PPW states that enabling development may be appropriate if the public benefit outweighs harm. It must always be in proportion to the public benefit it offers. The proposed development will overall improve the immediate area of Newbridge Road and the community, providing a clear public benefit that would outweigh any minimal impact on the nearby heritage assets and designations.
- 7.12 A farmhouse is an important feature of any farmstead and it is important that farms are retained around the urban-rural fringe for future generations. Allowing a replacement farmhouse will improve the overall setting and key views of the nearby heritage assets and designations, through enhancing the immediate area through design considerations. The replacement farmhouse pays respect in certain ways to what has been sited in its location for years and can carry on the legacy of Chapel Farm as discussed in the Planning Statement.

- 7.13 It can be demonstrated a new replacement farmhouse will have no direct effect on the settings of the listed buildings due to the current state of the building and the distances between the heritage assets.

8.0 ASSESSMENT AND CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The proposal is demolishing an existing three storey redundant farmhouse and replacing with a two-storey replacement farmhouse with adjoining double garage at Chapel Farm. The farmhouse itself and no buildings on the farm are listed.
- 8.2 The neighbouring Grade II Cefn Bychan Baptist Chapel and Grade II* Railway Viaduct which can be viewed from Chapel Farm are the designated heritage assets which this HIA has assessed the impact on. It is recognised Chapel Farm is within the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site Buffer Zone, but only on the edge and therefore the proposal does not have any impacts on this area.
- 8.3 The proposal will have no detrimental impact on the setting on the neighbouring listed assets and the proposal will enhance the setting of these, currently the redundant farmhouse does not enhance the areas appearance very well.
- 8.4 For the reasons outlined in the statement, these proposals are considered to be well-designed and proportionate to the existing redundant farmhouse. It will ensure the long-term future of the farm and provide a new dwelling to enable the family to live at the farm full-time.
- 8.5 The proposed farmhouse will not appear to dissimilar to what the original dwelling would have looked like. The adjacent garaging is replacing an existing building which will improve the whole aesthetics of the yard.
- 8.6 A proposed replacement dwelling will improve the appearance of Newbridge Road, as well as views across from the valley and viaduct. Photographs provided demonstrate the current poor state of the house, and how this appears on the roadside.
- 8.7 There can be considered to be a public benefit for the replacement of this farmhouse. The house is not hidden away down a track, its in public view on the side of busy road within the settlement boundary. The replacement of this house will improve the overall street scene of

Newbridge Road and key views will be enhanced from designated heritage assets and local bordering designations.

- 8.8 The benefits of the proposal in terms of heritage conservation exceed any losses, and ,on that basis the application should respectfully be approved without delay.