

HERITAGE IMPACT & ACCESS
STATEMENT
6 PARK STREET
RUABON
MARCH 2022



No 6 Park Street, east end of a block of 4 cottages
viewed from the south.

HERITAGE IMPACT & ACCESS STATEMENT - 6 PARK STREET RUABON

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SECTION I

Objectives:

The intention is to remove the 'modern' extension to the rear elevation of no 6 Park Street and replace it with a stone faced slate roofed extension more in keeping with the cottage.

Also to replace the flat roofed brick garage to the north end of the plot to the rear of the cottage, with a brick face garage with a pitched and slated roof to match the roof to the cottage.

The external alterations will be a significant visual improvement to a modest building that sits in the south east corner of the Ruabon Conservation Area, at the southern end of the principal street that runs through the town.

SECTION II

Historic Asset:

The cottage was originally part of the Wynnstay Estate, being one of eight workers cottages on Park Street, a road that runs directly from the centre of Ruabon to the parkland that surrounded Wynnstay Hall.



In his 'A History of Llangollen and it's Vicinity' of 1853, W. T. Simpson mentions Ruabon:

'A neat, pleasant village about 6 miles east of Llangollen. It is surrounded by mines of coal and ironstone with which the neighbourhood abounds.....'

Adjoining the town of Ruabon, a road passes into the park, to the mansion of Wynnstay. The hereditary estate of the ancient and honourable family of Sir Watkins Williams Wynn, Bart.

A Porter resides at a small house on the left side of the entrance to the park, who admits all strangers requesting it...

A decade or so earlier Nicholson devoted a chapter or two to Ruabon in his 'Nicholson's Cambrian Travellers Guide of 1840' and mentions the entrance to the park at the east end of Park Street:

'At this place is a comfortable inn, whence the park gate of Wynnstay is seen, the seat of Sir Watkins Williams Wynn, Bart...

With permission, the traveller may examine its varied and magnificent improvements. The avenue is formed of oaks, elms, beeches, chestnuts, and planes, which extend 1 mile

A carriage road leads into a spacious lawn, upon which stands Wynnstay Hall.

Nicholson does not refer to the estate workers cottages standing between the Inn (presumably the Wynnstay Arms as it is known today) and the park entrance.

The listing suggests that they were built around this time so his visit to the town may have pre dated their construction. In any event it is likely that the residents of the cottages would over the second half of the C19th witnessed the coming and goings of 'the great and the good' as the cottages formed a square enclosing the short road leading directly to the entrance to the Wynnstay Estate.

This informal square was used for other purposes such as the assembly of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers at the time of the first great war.

Park Street remained relatively unchanged until the 1960's when it was significantly narrowed due to the introduction of parking bays on either side of the road.

Listing:

Despite the relationship with the Wynnstay Estate there is little information on public record regarding the cottage. the building only being listed in 1995. The reason given being the group value with neighbouring estate cottages on Park Street.

History:

One of four blocks of estate cottages on Park Street probably built c1840.

Each block originally consisted of two 1-up 1-down units reached from the side, two 2-up, 2-down units reached from a pair of doors in the street elevation, and a further pair of 1-up 1-down units reached from the other side. All rooms had corner fireplaces and the units shared flues leading to large octagonal chimneys. Neighbouring 1-up 1-down units have now been altered to form one dwelling and the blocks all have later extensions to the rear.

Exterior:

Symmetrical elevation, 2-storey, 4 windows. Roughly coursed and squared sandstone rubble with dressed stone quoins, hipped slate roof with two octagonal stone chimneys, that to the left rendered. Paired central entrances share a stone canopy, altered doors.

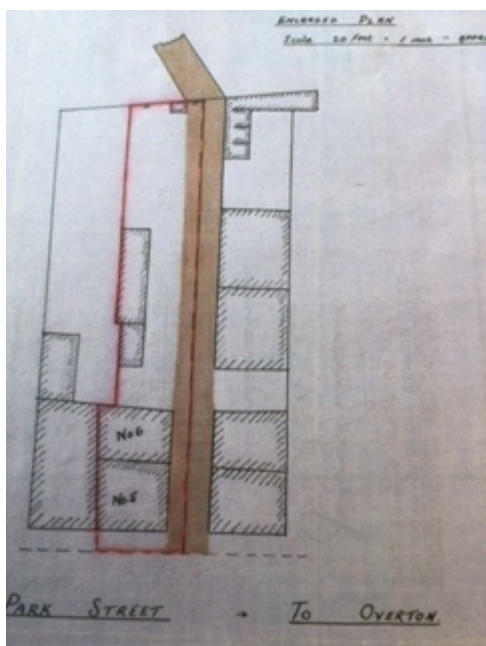
Windows have hood moulds, those at ground floor badly eroded, those at upper level restored. Left hand return has paired entrances under shared stone canopy, that to the right now a window. Right hand return as left hand return.

Interior:

Generally the two unit cottages retain basic plan from, some original stairs and blocked corner fireplaces.

Alteration & Refurbishment:

As noted in the listing, four of the cottages were built as '1-up, 1 down' houses, this included nos. 5 and 6 Park Street as shown on a site plan dated 1951 when the cottages were purchased from the Wynstay Estate.



The position of the original second 'front door' can still be seen on the east elevation adjacent to the existing entrance door, complete with hood mould and stone canopy above. The opening has been built up in stonework to match the original and accommodates a small window to the living room.

It is not known when the properties were altered to their present layout, but it certainly predates the works that were undertaken as part of a comprehensive programme of repair and refurbishment to most of the houses in Park Street between 1996 and 2006. Carried out under the Township Partnership Scheme, work to no 6 took place in early 2001.

While the exteriors of the buildings, in particular the street elevations appear to have been dealt with sympathetically, the interiors, if no 6 is an example of the work that was done, were not.

Almost all the internal joinery, including doors, skirtings and architraves were replaced, the works also included the renewal of all plaster surfaces with sand and cement render with a modern gypsum based skim coat. Ceilings were over-boarded in plasterboard and floors were replaced in concrete.

Windows were replaced and although they have nicely detailed moulded frames and flush casements they are clearly different to the original windows which had multi paned casements as shown on the pre war photograph above.

Original fireplaces and other features of interest were removed leaving the interior of the cottage almost devoid of any indication as to its age and original purpose, other than its slightly unusual layout.

Existing Structures

Extension:

There is a small single storey extension on the rear elevation.

It is unclear when the extension was built though it may be one of the 'later extensions' referred to in the 1995 listing.

The continuous run of window frames on all elevations are unmoulded and the facing stonework is of poor quality with cement based mortar. Oddly the rear wall of the cottage that forms the 'internal' wall to the extension also appears to have been pointed in a cement mortar, but of a different type to that used on the external walls of the extension.



The gable comprises upvc boarding with barge boards and window cills clad in the same material, gutters and downpipes are in black plastic.



The only redeeming feature is the roof which is clad in slate though with incorrect ridge tiles and at a shallower pitch than the cottage roof. The Schedule of Works for the 2001 refurbishment project indicate that the pitched roof was installed at that time, replacing an existing flat roof.

It is likely that the extension has been used for little more than as a back porch and an ad hoc utility room. It provides protection against the weather to the back door of the cottage but being unheated with large areas of single glazing and facing North, it is a cold and unpleasant space with little to commend it.

Garage:

The garage may have been built at the same time as the extension having a flat roof as the extension originally had, although structurally sound it is in poor condition particularly the external joinery and roof covering.



It is built of a single leaf of brickwork with the aforementioned felt covered roof.

There is a small 'shed' on the west side of the garage built of the same materials though it has a shallow sloping corrugated 'tin' roof

The garage is narrow and of a size that will only just accommodate a single family car with no room to work or to store materials.

A area of hard standing in front of the garage comprised of brick setts is accessed from the narrow shared tarmac drive between the two blocks of cottages.

SECTION III

The Proposals:

Extension:

An extension slightly larger than the present structure is proposed in the same position as the existing.

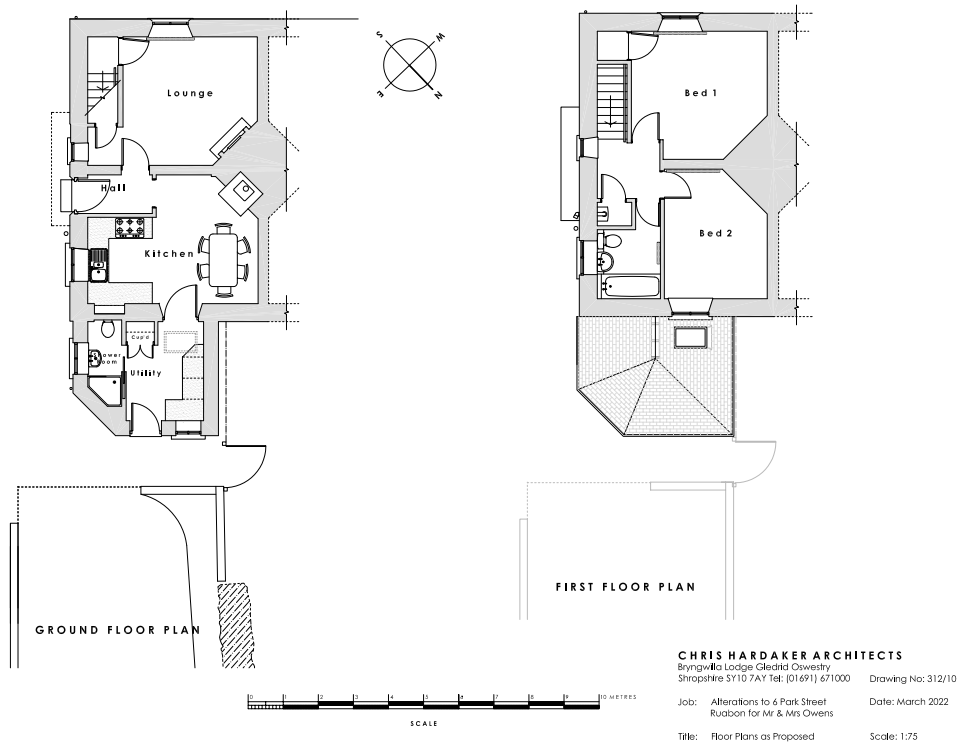
As previously mentioned the existing extension is of a size such that it is of little use other than as a generous rear lobby that can accommodate one or two appliances.

The purpose of the new extension is to provide sufficient accommodation for a small utility room which will also serve as a rear hall or 'boot room' and for a shower room.

The ground floor of the cottage comprises a modest living room and kitchen with a small space between them which also serves as the entrance hall. There is no space available for a utility room, cloakroom or a w.c., even if it was permissible (or desirable) to alter the layout. The only practicable solution is a modest extension on the rear elevation.

The internal layout of the proposed extension is as shown on drawing no 321/10.

The rear door of the extension is positioned centrally on the rear elevation enabling a route to be created to the existing kitchen window which it is proposed is altered to form a doorway into the kitchen.



No alterations to the structure are required to form the doorway, simply the careful removal of the window cill and the masonry below it.

The route between the doors is just large enough to accommodate a rear hall which will provide a small but workable utility/boot room as well as providing access to the new cloak room.

The 2001 Schedule of Works shows that the opening to the existing kitchen door was to be altered, none of the joinery to the door (or window) is original. There is a suggestion that it may not have been the original opening, perhaps dating from the post 1951 alterations when the two properties became one.

The current proposal is to close it off in studwork with no alteration to the structure or masonry.

These minor alterations to the existing door and window also enable the kitchen units to be installed on the east side of the house where the drains run in the shared driveway between no 6 and the adjacent property. Currently there is exposed internal drainage in both the kitchen and extension to accommodate the sink in the existing kitchen units on the other side of the room.

The cill of the existing window at the east end of the room is high enough to allow the sink to be positioned beneath it which is not possible under the window on the rear elevation.

Relocating the kitchen units also frees up space at the other side of the room to accommodate a dining table from which there will be a view of the garden through the new extension.

The proposed elevations are shown on drawing no 312/12.



Materials generally will match those of the cottage with stone and lime mortar as close a match to that of the cottage as possible.

Similarly, exposed woodwork as well as cast iron or aluminium rainwater goods will be painted black to match the external joinery of the cottage, windows and doors colours will also match the existing.

As mentioned the roof of the extension will be of the same pitch of the cottage and covered in Welsh slates of the same colour. The size of the slates will be similar though slightly smaller slates might be appropriate on what is a significantly smaller roof.

In order to achieve the necessary pitch the cill of the bedroom window on the rear elevation will be raised by approximately 125mm, also reducing the size of the window. In fact, it will then match the size and proportions of the adjacent bedroom window on the rear wall of no 5 Park Street which has been similarly altered at some point.

Other than opening up the blocked up fireplace in the kitchen to install a wood burning stove together with making good and redecoration, no alterations are proposed to the interior.

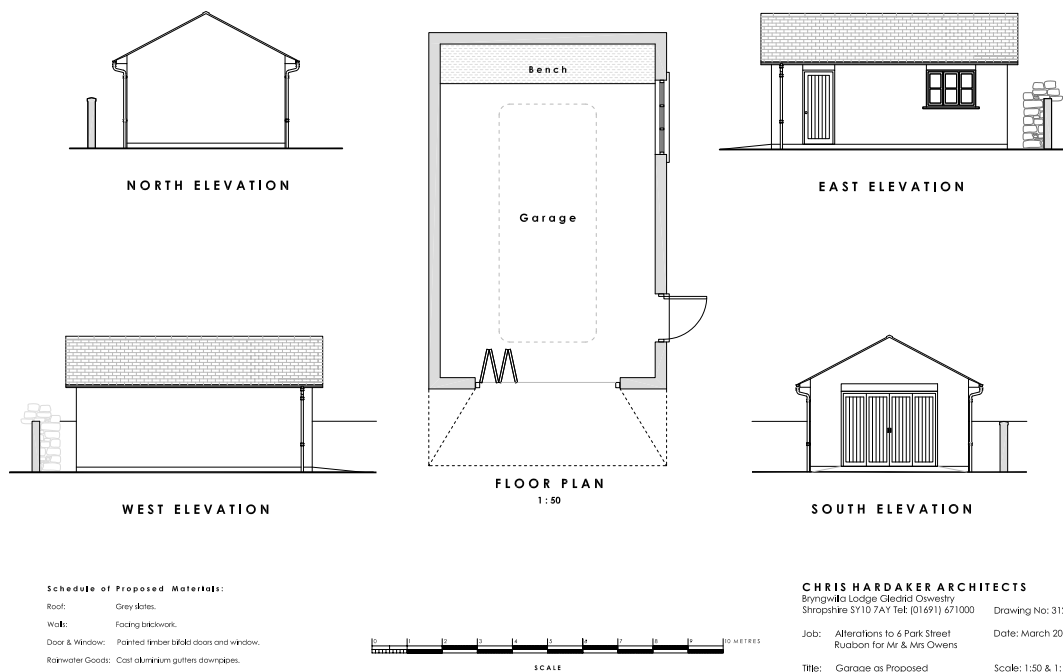
Garage:

The proposed garage will be constructed in brick but unlike the current building will have a pitched and slated roof using the same pitch and materials as the cottage and proposed extension, eaves details will match the other buildings.

It sits in a similar position to the existing garage but is a little larger, being able to accommodate a family sized car with space for a work bench and the storage of items such as a ladder and garden tools.

The garage doors are bifold timber doors, it is also proposed to include a timber side door and window, the window to match those to the cottage.

The proposals are shown on drawing no 321/15.



External joinery as well as the rainwater goods will be painted black to match the cottage and extension.

SECTION IV

Reasoning:

There are a number of reasons for making the alterations to no 6 Park Street, the benefits of which might be summarised as follows:

- * The existing extension and garage predate the 1995 listing of the cottage and contribute very little which is positive to its appearance. Replacing them with structures which respond to and respect the listed cottage which externally at least is largely original, will bring a degree of cohesion to the property which it currently lacks.

- * The new extension will not only provide significantly improved accommodation for a utility/boot room but also a new ground floor shower room. With an aging population ground floor facilities such as these are becoming increasingly essential as they are in this instance.
- * Whilst using matching materials, external joinery details and other features of a mid 19th century building, the extension will be built to current standards and provide much needed thermal protection to the rear North facing elevation of the cottage, benefiting the building as a whole. This will help to reduce heating bills and provide a more sustainable solution than the existing extension.
- * Improving the overall appearance of the building will encourage others to do the same which is to the benefit of us all.

Conclusion:

For the reasons outlined above it is suggested that the modest proposals for no 6 Park Street will enhance the heritage value of the listed building, benefiting the setting of other heritage assets in the vicinity and in doing so, make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area and the town generally.

SECTION V - ACCESS

Existing:

Currently there are two points of pedestrian access to the cottage, the 'front door' on the east gable and the 'rear door' to the existing extension.

Vehicular access is via the narrow drive between nos. 6 & 7 Park Street.

Proposed:

No alterations are proposed to the 'front door' but the new 'rear door' will be on the rear North facing wall of the new extension.

The change in position of the 'rear door' is due in part to the internal layout of the new extension, but also to provide a door that does not open directly onto the drive. The applicant is hard of hearing and is concerned that she (or her grandchildren), may not hear a vehicle on the drive and step out in front of it.

It has the added advantage that daily comings and goings through the rear door are afforded some measure of privacy as it is not visible from Park Street.

No changes are proposed to the vehicular access.

No provision for disabled access is proposed, the public will not require access to the house as it is used entirely for private purposes.

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