

CHAIN BANK, CHIRK

WREXHAM



DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT INCLUDING HERITAGE IMPACT STATEMENT

February 2022

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I. INTRODUCTION

This document is produced in support of an application for Planning Permission for a new garage and a deck on the south side of the detached house. The existing house is an Arts and Crafts design in cavity wall construction with facing brick and rendered common brick to the outer leaf. It has metal windows with rectangular leaded lights in timber frames and a slate roof. 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, part of the Llangollen Canal World Heritage Site. The house is situated within the Chirk Conservation Area, and subject to an Article 4(2) Direction.

2. OBJECTIVE

Mr. Richards purchased the house in 2021 in order to provide accommodation and home care for his father-in-law, Kevin, who has been wheelchair bound for twenty years following a stroke and heart surgery. He is unable to walk or move his left side, and relies on carers coming in three times a day. Kevin has now accepted it is not safe for him to live alone and he intends to move in with his daughter and son in law at Chain Bank as soon as the accommodation has been adapted for him to provide some independence and safe space while having company to also support him. Mr Richards has already made some alterations to the interior of the house so that Kevin can have his own suite of rooms accessed with a through the floor lift. He also wants to erect a deck to the south side of the house in order to provide level access for Kevin to enjoy the outside fresh air and views of the garden and also able to attend family gatherings at this home.

The existing garage is difficult to access and too small for most modern cars. This will be converted to a small wheelchair accessible workshop for Kevin's use. Mr Richards wants to erect a double garage to the west of the house which will accommodate a car and a camper van. Because of the slope of the land there will be room on the south side to install a workshop at a lower level. Part of the workshop will be under the garage and part outside; the roof of the external part will be a terrace accessed from the garage.

3. DESIGN

The deck design intends to be made to last with steel frame and block and beam structure topped with a stone / concrete paving. Subject to engineer's recommendations the existing walkway at the rear will be reinforced as a retaining wall with the deck built over it and extending a further two meters to the south. The stone facing of the existing walkway around the house will be re-used to face the area below part of the deck; where there is headroom the lower area will be used for garden storage.

The original design for the garage had timber cladding and a slate roof at 30° pitch. However, after discussion with the Conservation officer, Kathryn Moore, Mr Richards agreed that it would be more in keeping with the house design to build the walls in blockwork with a rendered finish above and brick slips below to match the existing lower brickwork of the house. The apex of the roof will be no higher than the height of the existing beech hedge.

There are a few minor alterations to the south elevation of the house itself – particularly the replacement of an existing sunroom on a similar footprint, and alterations to the roof at the west end to provide balconies to the main bedroom and the dressing room. Many of the windows are in poor condition. Some are broken and nearly all are ill-fitting, and some of the opening lights are unable to be opened. Mr Richards has discussed a remedial strategy with the Kathryn Moore, and details are included below in the Heritage Impact Statement.

4. SITE

4.1 The north boundary is the edge of Castle Road. At present this is marked by a hedge which is very overgrown, with many gaps. Mr Richards had originally planned to remove the hedge and erect a 1m high stone wall similar to one on the boundary of a neighbouring property, topped with metal railings. However, since the hedges in the Conservation area are specifically mentioned in the Character Assessment and Management Plan (2014), he has agreed to leave the hedge in place, to lay it and to fill any gaps with native species – for example beech, hornbeam and hawthorn. New timber field gates have already been fitted at both ends of the drive, and these will remain. The eastern end of the driveway was open, and this has been closed with a temporarily timber fence on concrete posts to provide security for construction plant and to prevent the dogs running out into the road. Mr Richards will plant hedging on the inside of this fence, and remove the fence once the hedge is sufficiently established.

4.2 The garden to the south is very overgrown, with self-seeded trees competing with some planted mature species. Mr Richards is 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. However, this does not form part of the current application. There is a separate application relating to the removal and management of trees within the garden, discussed with the Wrexham Council Arboricultural Officer, Jon Brewin (reference P/2022/0055).

4.3 Access to the new garage will be from the west end of the drive, retaining as much of the beech hedge as possible. Approximately 8m of the beech hedge will be removed, but the garage will still be screened from the road by the boundary hedge. Approximately 70m of new beech hedge will be planted along the western boundary, replacing the existing scrub.

5. HERITAGE IMPACT STATEMENT

5.1 Article 4(2) Direction

5.1.1 The new garage

As described above, the design has been changed following Mr Richard's discussion with Kathryn Moore. It will now be rendered blockwork with brick finish below to match the brickwork of the house. The roof will still be 30° pitch natural slate, and the apex will be no higher than the beech hedge on the south side of the drive. The garage will be screened from the road by the boundary hedge, once this has been properly laid and has matured. It will not be visible from the World Heritage Site nor from the path leading to it from Castle Road.

5.1.2 The erection of the deck

There is already a walkway around the south and eastern elevations of the house, faced with a dry-stone retaining wall. This will be widened to give wheelchair access around the house and a view of the garden. There will be a glass balustrade around the new deck which will have a minimum impact on the south elevation. The existing retaining wall will be replaced with a concrete retaining wall to engineer's design, and the stone re-used to enclose part of the sub-deck space which will be used for garden storage. The deck will not be visible from the World Heritage Site nor from the path leading to it from Castle Road.

5.1.3 Changes to the south elevation

A photograph taken soon after the house was built shows the open view to the aqueduct, now a World Heritage Site. The trees in the garden have now grown to screen this view, but the proposed thinning of some of the trees will allow glimpses from the house. The changes to the south elevation are proposed in order to maximise this view. An existing cupboard off the master bedroom will become a balcony by removing part of the external wall and replacing the partition with French doors and new windows. There is an existing sunroom of indifferent design; this will be replaced with an enlarged sunroom with a new balcony above accessed from the dressing room. The doors into the existing sunroom are original and will be repaired and retained. The south elevation 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.

5.1.4 Works to the windows

The windows are typical Arts and Crafts design, rectangular leaded lights set in steel frames with timber sub-frames. Some of the glass is obscured and some clear. The steel frames are corroded and some of the timber surrounds are rotten. The general principle agreed with Kathryn Moore is that the south and west facing windows may be replaced with clear double-glazing units, without the lead comes, but keeping the arrangement of timber surrounds and

mullions like for like. The windows on the north will be replaced either like for like with rectangular panes in lead comes and secondary glazing, or with the leaded panels encapsulated in double glazing inside and outside, with a sample submitted for approval.

The present colour is a pale blue. Mr Richards would like to paint the timber frames and mullions in a green as often favoured by Arts and Crafts designers (see picture)



Elevations of Walnut Tree Farm from Karen Livingstone C.F.A. Voysey

5.1.5 Alterations to the boundary hedges and installation of gates

The northern boundary hedge will be laid and gaps filled with native species. As described above, native species will also be planted behind the new temporary fencing, which will be removed once the hedge is sufficiently established.

The timber field gates which Mr Richards has installed have been agreed with Ms Moore.

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.”

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.”

Mr Richards has discussed the window repairs and replacements in detail with Ms Moore. The thinning of trees in the garden to allow the copper beech to be viewed and to flourish is the subject of a separate planning application, P/2022/0055.

Another feature mentioned in the Chirk Conservation Area Assessment is the negative effect of some changes to boundary treatments:

“5.6 Boundaries within the Conservation Area have suffered mainly due to the desire to create hardstandings and vehicular access. This has also involved the loss of some hedges and garden areas and has impinged upon the sense of enclosure in some instances. In addition, the use of inappropriate hard cement mortars to repair existing boundaries is accelerating the rate of decay of the original stone and brickwork and detracts from their appearance. Modern close boarded and poor quality fencing has been used in certain areas and is in contrast to the traditional brick and stone boundaries and natural hedging characteristic of the Conservation Area.”

The existing boundary hedge to Castle Road is overgrown and straggly, set on an earth bank which washes into the road in heavy rain. The original plan was to replace the hedge with a low stone wall and iron railings of traditional design, but after discussion with Ms Moore, Mr Richards has agreed to retain the hedge and lay it as detailed above, paragraph 4.1.

5.3 Chirk Aqueduct, Viaduct and Tunnel (World Heritage Site)

These structures 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 alterations to the south elevation will therefore have no impact on the World heritage Site.

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



Chain Bank Chirk Proposed Deck and Garage – Design and Access Statement



Existing garage and outbuildings



East side of house



North elevation and drive



West elevation and walkway



South elevation and garden



Mature trees in garden 1/11/21



West end of drive with beech hedge 11/21



West end of drive looking east 1/11/21

Chain Bank Chirk Proposed Deck and Garage – Design and Access Statement



East end of drive and road, 1/11/21



New gate and temporary fence 1/2/22



West end of drive 1/11/21



New gate at west end of drive 1/2/22



North boundary hedge 1/2/22



West boundary hedge 1/2/22

