

Design, Access & Heritage Statement for proposed works to boundary walls, entrance gates and railings at

Epworth Lodge, Grove Road, Wrexham



For Mr & Mrs Thomas

Sean D Pemble RIBA

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Introduction

This Design, Access and heritage Impact statement is written in relation to the property known as Epworth Lodge in Wrexham.

This application seeks to gain consent for the careful demolition and rebuilding of the NW garden boundary wall which is currently in poor aesthetic and structural condition, the creation of a new gated opening in the central garden wall to permit easier access and also the erection of new driveway entrance gates with associated piers and walling works.

All proposals contained within this application have been considered against the NPPF and local planning policy.

Setting and Location

Epworth Lodge is situated on the northern side of Grove Road in Wrexham. It is approximately ½ a mile north of the main town centre and in a residential area established in the mid 19thC.

Grove Road is located within the central ‘Grosvenor Road’ designated conservation area.





Aerial screenshot of satellite map 2018 showing location of Epworth Lodge.

Historic overview

Epworth Lodge was constructed in 1865 as a manse to Bryn y Ffynnon Methodist church. It is built primarily of random (presumably Cefn) rubblestone beneath coped gables and blue welsh slate roof coverings. It is believed that the design is attributable to one of the Gummow family (likely JR Gummow), the local and well reputed family of architects from Wrexham and Shrewsbury responsible for various works to country houses and cathedrals in the local area. Their style was a curious blend of either classical ionic or rococo Gothick, which would correlate with this well executed piece of asymmetric design.

As with many 19thC residences, the majority of its fabric and layout has not escaped unaltered. To the rear elevation it is quite clear that a reasonable degree of re-ordering has occurred, most of which seems to have happened in the 20thC. The same can be said of the interior, which can presumably be associated with its lapse in use as a Methodist manse and transformation into a dwelling once again. Given that listing protection did not occur until the mid-1990's, it is clear to see why little written evidence exists of the changes made.

The boundary walls (to the NW in the garden and SW of the driveway) are quite clearly of 19thC origin, contemporary with the construction of the buildings in this area. It is also clear that the rear boundary wall has been raised at some point in its life with a later more uniform brick. Its copings are of sandstone and remain in good condition despite the very heavy outward lean of the wall – no doubt held up in part by earth and vegetation.

The central garden wall would also have originally been primary (in terms of its fabric) but has long since been taken down and rebuilt with modern cement mortar, simply adjoining to a previous structure within the wall – presumed privy.

To the front driveway, the existing stone entrance piers remain in good condition, again no doubt contemporary with the construction of the house though the gates have long since been removed. The wall to its SW is again of 19thC in date with half round copings and a substantial inward lean to the end closest to Grove road.

An excerpt of the CADW listing description can be read as follows:

Epworth Lodge

Listing date 31 January 1994 - Grade II

CADW, source ID 1836

Rhosddu, Wrexham, Denbighshire (Domestic)

Built as manse to Bryn y Ffynnon Methodist Church in 1865 but now a private house.

Random rubble with ashlar dressings and slate roof. 2 storeys, L-plan with central entrance hall, employing a picturesque asymmetrical domestic gothic style. Hipped roofed porch in angle of the 2 ranges to the front, with shouldered arch to doorway. Advanced coped gabled range to the right has squared bay window to ground floor, with pointed arched mullioned lights and lean-to roof, and 3-light window above, with shafts as mullions. 2 narrow shouldered windows in left hand range, and trefoiled window over porch. This range faces SW, with canted bay window with shouldered mullioned lights to ground floor, and 3-light window with shouldered shafts as mullions beneath coped gable above. Rear of this range has gable facing garden, with shouldered mullioned windows in gable end and side wall, and stack on corner of gable. Late C20 conservatory projects from ground floor. Continuation of gabled wing also advanced to rear. Continuous string course to principal elevations, and moulded stone brackets to oversailing eaves. Axial stack and end wall stacks in this wing, and axial stack in SW wing, all with moulded caps.

Part of an important group of late C19 villas, which together form a good example of urban estate development.

Background to application

Since moving into their new residence in 2015, it has been necessary to undertake several repair projects, namely the roof, rainwater goods, chimneys and high level masonry which has only just recently been completed.

Having now undertaken the most urgent items, it is desirable to begin the next phase of required repair works to the property whilst making subtle improvements where possible. This primarily involves its curtilage fabric and landscaping – specifically the boundary walls, driveway entrance and central garden wall.

Pre-application consultation was undertaken with the conservation officer, Anna Irwin, on 28th March 2018. All aspects of the scheme contained within this application were shown on site to which no formal objections were raised to any aspect, subject to submission of a formal application for consent.

Proposed scheme

After the undertaking of an outline feasibility scheme to assess the scale and impact of the proposed works, it is now possible to confirm the following as Mr & Mrs Thomas' principal wishes in this application. These include:

- To carefully take down the NW garden boundary wall. All reusable bricks (circa 10%) will be set aside for re-use as paving bricks to the outbuilding. The stone copings will also be reused. A new stepped footing will then be constructed to avoid such a lean in future, with the new wall constructed to the same height but with five new buttresses as indicated. Bricks are to

be closely matched and supplied by Snowie heritage, laid and pointed in cement mortar with sharp sand.

- To insert a new gated opening into the central garden wall. As highlighted above, this wall has been substantially rebuilt and altered with old stone recycled in cement mortar. It is proposed to create a new axial opening in line with the house so that passage to the garden at the rear is not only made easier but is more visually linked also. Stone taken out will be set aside for reuse in future, with repairs in lime mortar and the jambs of the new opening made good to match. The new gates will be in a pair, fixed to masonry of jambs and in simple gothic traditional style, made in black iron. Piers will also be formed with stone cappings to match precedents on the property, 3no in total.
- To erect new entrance gates and railings from Grove Road. These will again be of traditional perhaps simple gothic design with two new return dwarf stone walls and plain stone piers, supporting two gates in black iron. These are to be hand operated and lock secured. The new gates will be set 5m back and inward opening to comply with highways and leave the former entrance gate piers legible.

Heritage Impact assessment

Taking the proposals above into account, the following principles and guidelines will be followed for the duration of the building works:

- a) All historic fabric will be built/scribed around to ensure that there is no loss of historic fabric or anything which may adversely affect future interpretations of the structures involved. The re-erected boundary wall will be respectful of materials i.e. of an appropriate handmade brick with lime mortar, re-using the existing coping stones. The same can be said for the central wall and railings which will all be of appropriate design and in keeping with the aesthetics of the main house.
- d) All works proposed have been developed with NPPF policy PPS5, and the considered good principles of conservation referred to by ICOMOS and the Burra Charter.
- e) All historic fabric is to be fully recorded in a hybrid of digital photography and measured drawings. Any fabric unearthed or uncovered during the proposed works will be carefully revealed and fully recorded before proceeding.

Access

No changes are principally proposed to the access of the property, though consideration has been given to the new railings and entrance gates (see drawing) which have been proposed in accordance with highways guidance – 5m from the carriageway to allow a vehicle to prevent obstruction whilst entering the property forecourt.

Photographic appendix

Please see below for photographs as existing for the relevant areas of the property.



FIG1 – general photo of NW boundary wall



FIG2 – general photo looking north of boundary wall



FIG3 – Close up photo of the wall showing poor condition of brickwork



FIG4 – photo showing dramatic lean toward neighbouring side, note later bricks at high level



FIG5 – view back toward house of central wall, heavily rebuilt in recent years



FIG6 – view of central wall toward rear of garden, in area of new proposed opening



FIG7 – close up view of area to be opened up



FIG8 – view of SW boundary wall to driveway, with heavy inward lean



FIG9 – view toward Grove road off of driveway



FIG10 – View of planting bed and piers etc. to be retained, but with new gated and railed abutment



FIG11 – View from Grove Road of entranceway to Epworth Lodge