

Heritage Statement

Argoed Lodge
Gate Road
Froncysyllte
Wrexham

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and Format

This statement has been prepared in connection with proposed works to a residential property Argoed Lodge. The purpose of the appraisal is to assess the significance of the building and how this significance might be affected by the planned changes. The document has been prepared in accordance with the general guidelines set out in the Managing Conservation Areas in Wales and in particular responds to heritage policies outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG, 2012).

1.2 Methods of Research and Investigation

Inspections of the site were carried out in February 2021 in order to assess its physical nature. Background research has also been conducted in order to fully ascertain contextual matters appertaining to the site's history. The scope of this research has, in accordance with the NPPF, been proportionate to the nature of the proposed works, with particular emphasis placed upon the special architectural and historic interest of the site and those planning policies that affect/control change.

2.0 GENERAL DESCRIPTION

2.1 Site Location

Argoed Lodge is situated on the B5435 looking over Shropshire Union Canal Llangollen Branch.

2.2 Site Description

The building is a detached 2 storey property. The front of the property is off Gate Road and the rear can be accessed via the canal parking area.

The site plan is given below in figure 1.

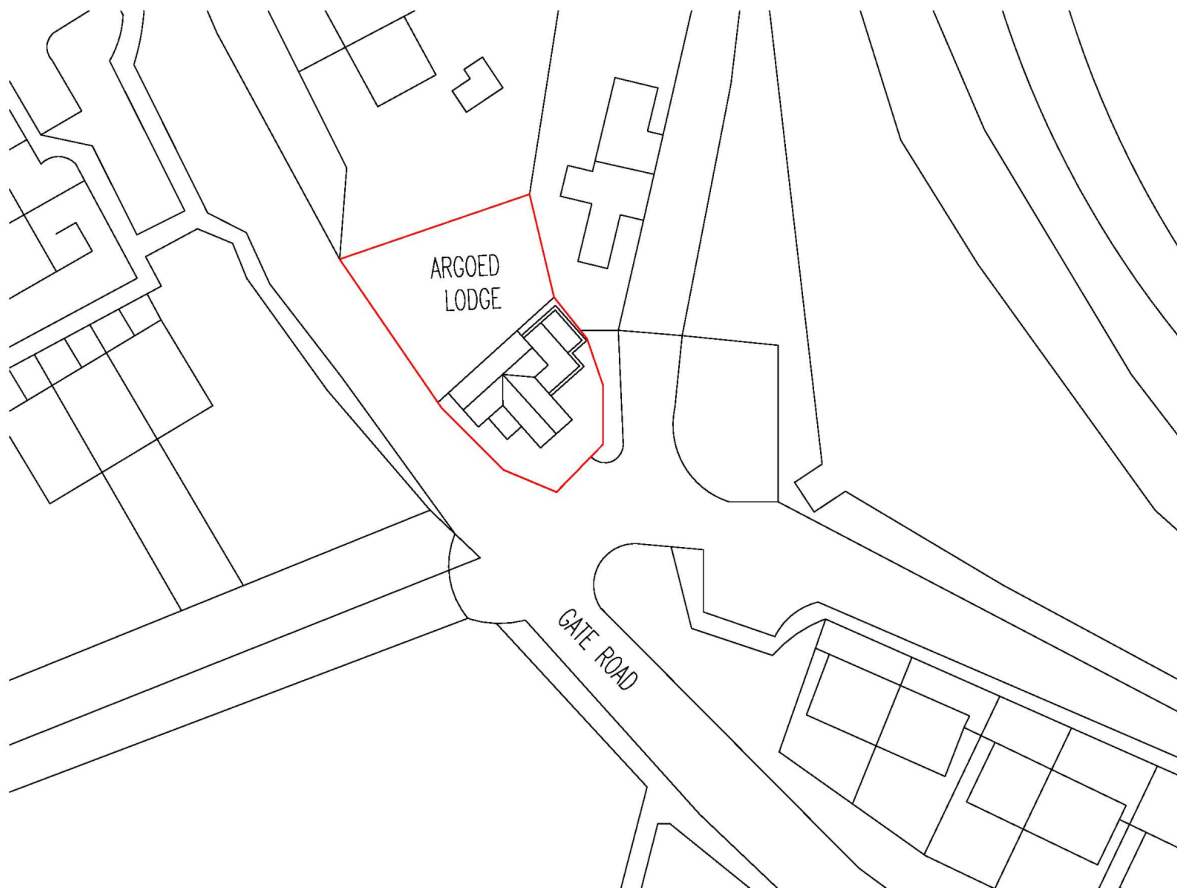


Figure 1. Site Plan (OS extract)

2.3 Building Description

The property is a 3 bedroom detached development finished with red/brown brick and white windows. The property takes up approximately 35% of the plot in its current state. The existing fascia height is 4.76m and the roof height is 6.98m. The garden has been stripped back as the existing foliage was overgrown and had become an eyesore due to the fact it has been left for so many years.

See Photos of front elevation of House.



Rear Elevation





2.4 Brief Summary of Proposals

The aim of the proposal is to create a family property which is fitting of both the area and modern building techniques. The proposals are to create a larger ground floor living space within the existing courtyard. The proposal is to keep as much of the building below the existing parapet line so to passers by it will look as it always has.

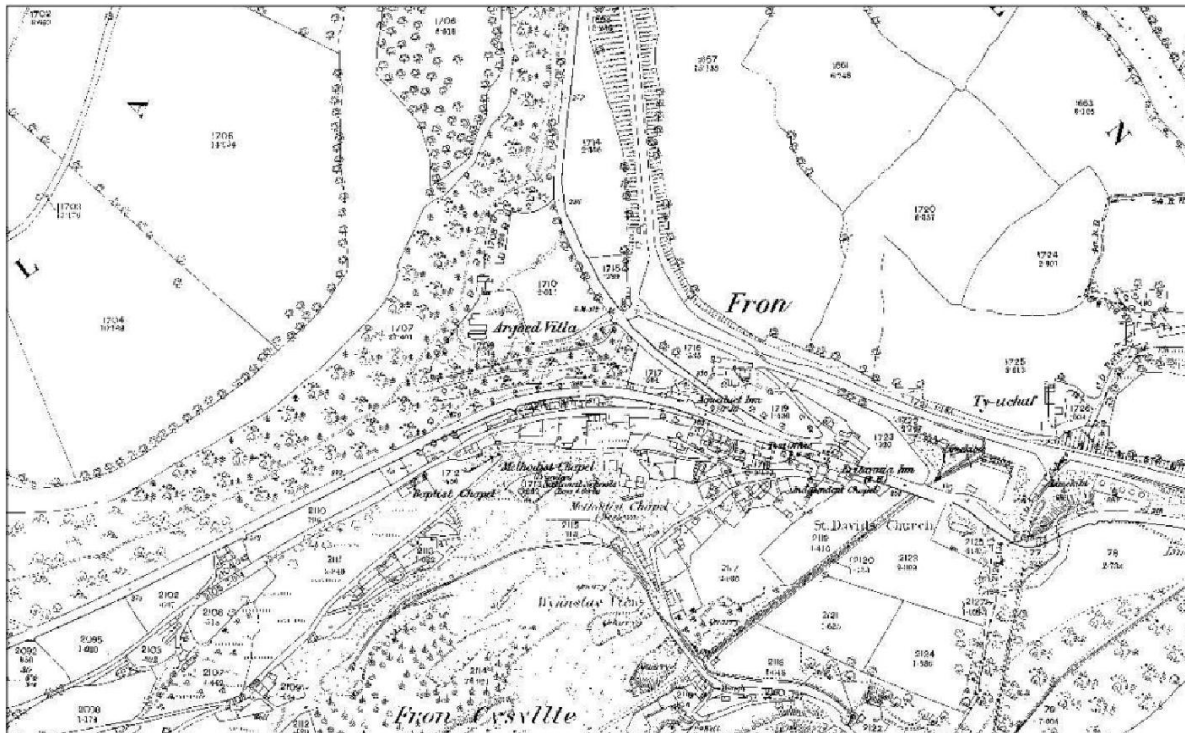
All new additions to the property (windows/doors) are to be timber while keeping the design and patterns of the old style windows which have now seriously decayed due to years of neglect. The proposed small section of pitched roof will be covered in slate to match the existing and the section of flat roof will be grey and will sit as mentioned below the existing parapet line.

3.0 HERITAGE APPRAISAL

3.1 Brief Historic Background

The above application falls within the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct conservation area. The Pontcysyllte Aqueduct conservation area was first designated as a conservation area in July of 1998. The conservation area is linear in form with its axis aligned approximately North - South. It incorporates key structures important in the canal development of the basin and is clearly different from the areas of 20th Century housing adjacent to the north and south ends. It includes the essential setting of the Aqueduct, the approach embankment and buildings associated with them.

Map 1 – 1877



3.2 Heritage Values

An appraisal of the heritage values associated with the property has been carried out, with particular interest in how these might be affected by the changes proposed. The appraisal process relates to the range of heritage values as outlined by Managing Conservation Areas in Wales and in particular responds to heritage policies outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG, 2012), which are distilled under the following headings: evidential value; historic value; communal value; aesthetic value. The purpose of assessing these values is to develop a clearer understanding of the site's significance – whether physically manifest (e.g. architectural features) or in some other less tangible form (e.g. historical associations) - so as to enhance the objective appraisal of proposals for changing the site. In essence this follows the approach generally advocated by English Heritage, whereby necessary change in the historic environment is intelligently managed.

3.2.1 Evidential Value

“Evidential value derives from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity”.

The property shows evidence of the existing use of the site – The property is still one single residential dwelling

3.2.2 Historical Value

“Historical value derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. It tends to be illustrative or associative”.

The historical value of the house medium as it was built in the mid/late 1800's.

3.2.3 Communal Value

“Communal value derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory”.

Low communal value can be attributed to the house. It is a building, with no communal purpose as it's a dwelling.

3.2.4 Aesthetic Value

“Aesthetic value derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place”.

The range of properties on the road give diversity to the area, the aesthetic value of this medium as the differing properties can not only give historical value but also have Architectural merit.

3.3 Statement of Significance

The low house heritage value combine to establish the significance of the building.

Evidentially, the house acts as a physical reminder of the mid/late 1800's and is an example of the local building methods and architecture in that time period.

4.0 ANALYSIS OF PROPOSED WORKS

4.1 General Principles

Given the consideration of significance included in section 3.0 above, it is possible to develop a more objective assessment of those proposals which are deemed to have a potential effect on the heritage asset. General guidance on assessing proposed changes to listed buildings is given in Managing Conservation Areas in Wales and in particular responds to heritage policies outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG, 2012). This advocates conserving the significance of buildings in conservation areas and the need to understand significance before proposing change, the overall intention being the avoidance of harm. An analysis of the policies in respect to the proposed scheme is given below in 4.2. Whereas local heritage planning policies also exist, these have in most instances been superseded by the recent NPPF. Otherwise, there exist policies and supplementary guidance in the conversion of rural buildings, but these are not solely concerned with heritage issues and therefore have only been considered in the general context of the current policy drivers.

4.2 Analysis of the Proposals: National Planning Policy Framework

As discussed above, section 12 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment) of the NPPF (2012) considers heritage planning and identifies the following key drivers in the decision making process:

- *the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- *the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;*
- *the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and*

- *opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.*

These drivers are then contextualised by a range of policies that seek to ensure effective management of development control decisions, placing the conservation of heritage significance at the core of decision making. This premise guides the consideration of change to heritage assets, as legally outlined within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act of 1990.

In order to establish a clearer objective assessment of the proposals in the context of the NPPF, the following commentary relates the completed/proposed changes to the house to the four principle policy drivers listed above. The works to the building are as previously outlined above in section 2.4 above.

4.2.1 The wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring.

The building is essentially a private structure situated on a site with other residential properties. Its potential for bestowing the social and cultural benefits referred to in the policy driver are limited, albeit as an historic feature of the landscape the property does at least contribute to the visual enjoyment of the local environment. The proposals will not be detrimental to this enjoyment, and the upgrades to the property will add to this.

4.2.2 The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

The flat roof over the courtyard - Within the Wrexham Conservation area assessment there is a very strong view against flat roofs for extensions however this instance is different. The design is intentionally low impact in nature and represents a minimal intervention approach to achieving the aim. Hiding the flat roof behind the existing parapet wall of the courtyard means that it will not be seen from the road/path and will be invisible to the eye.

5.0 Summary & Conclusion

The application proposals have been carefully put together with a clear understanding and appreciation of the importance of this designated conservation site, and how the various elements on the site contribute in their individual or collective way. The proposed development for the property at Argoed Lodge is all carefully considered and well designed to ensure the proposal responds positively to this context and to add to the value and quality of the area.

In the opinion of the author, the proposals represent a well-conceived and innovative scheme, which acknowledges and responds to the significance of a site. It fulfils policy requirements and, if executed in a careful and high-quality manner on site, should prove to help sustain and enhance a designated heritage asset for many years to come.