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Heritage Impact Statement



Statement prepared for:

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Statement required for:

Proposed reconstruction of Grade II Listed Bunkers Hill Cottages to form holiday let.

1st February 2021

Contents

Explaining Objectives	3
Understanding Significance	3
Identifying proposed changes including assessing the impact and reasoning	5
Policies	7
Conclusion.....	8

Explaining Objectives

The objective of this proposal is to bring the Grade 2 listed building back to its former glory. At this current time, the building has been subject to years of deterioration meaning only a small element of the asset can now be seen.

The application site is located within the Bersham Conservation Area. Bersham is a small village in the suburbs of Wrexham County Borough that lies next to the River Clywedog, and the community of Esclusham. The conservation area is located within the wooded part of the upper reaches of the Clywedog valley, which runs from Minera to Wrexham. According to Bersham's Character Assessment, the influences of both the ironworks and the nearby Plas Power Estate are evident in the development of the village, the architectural styles and features, which afford Bersham its unique character.

The Bersham Character Assessment states the conservation area was first designated in August 1975 and its boundary amended in 2003. Activity in the area can be traced back to the Roman period when lead and other minerals were mined in the Esclusham and Minera mountains.

Understanding Significance

Initially there were 13 cottages constructed on the site for the workers of John Wilkinson's Bersham Ironworks. From information obtained from previous ordnance survey maps, it appears the 13 cottages was reduced to 10 between the 1870's and the 1910's. The following 50's years seen little change to the maps, however the two most west cottages became numbered 9 and 10. Following this, the 2010 ordnance survey maps show no remains of the cottages. A survey conducted which highlights the extent of remains can be seen on drawing no. EL073/001.

The cottages were constructed around 1785, where the design is thought to have come from buildings in Shropshire. Now, the remains are Grade 2 listed under CADW reference no. 1720. Cottages 9 and 10 have been listed for their historical significance as the only surviving part of the original late C18 terrace, highly important as a rare and very early example of purpose-designed industrial housing in Wales. (CADW, 2021).

On the hill are the recently built Brambley House and the New Bungalow. Between the two is the site of Bunkers Hill Cottages, named after the first major battle in the American War of Independence.

The cottages have been left to deteriorate for several years and are heading to a state of disrepair. Originally, the walls were constructed using solid brickwork, however, the remains were of a rendered finish when listed in 1984. As seen on the cover photo, the roofs comprised natural slate which is a common material used in the locality. Each cottage had a 2 room plan with chimney stacks on each gable end.

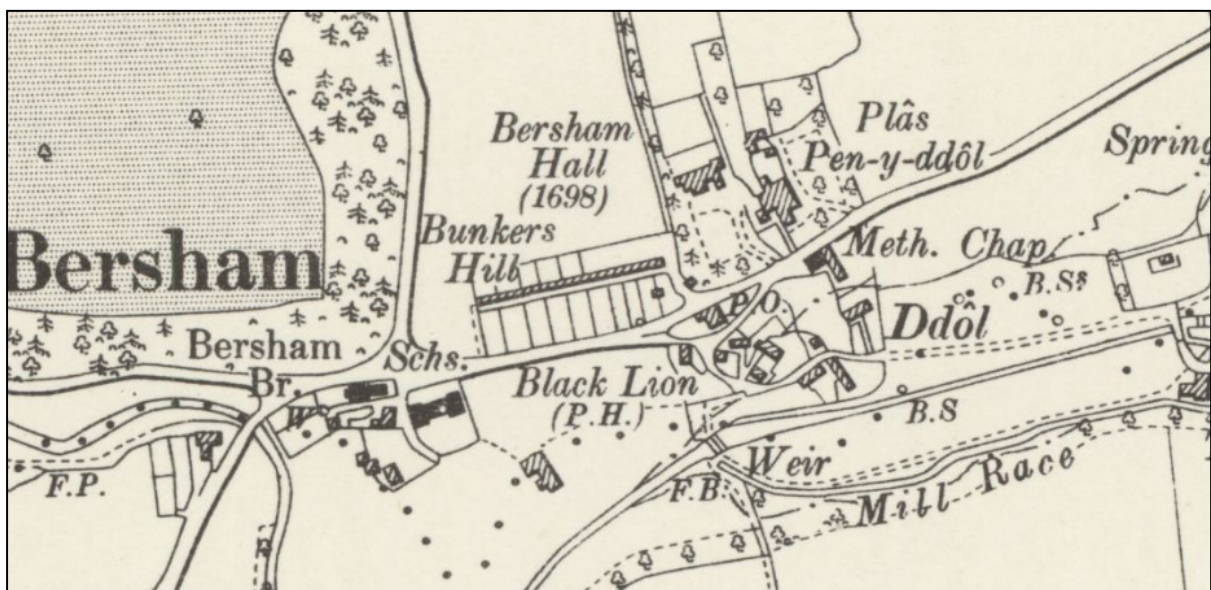


Figure 1- 1898 Ordnance Survey Map (Sourced from National Library of Scotland)



Figure 2- 1938 Ordnance Survey Map (Sourced from National Library of Scotland)

The below image indicates the application site with the neighbouring properties. It can be seen the extent of the shrubbery which occupies the site meaning the cottages are not visible from the road.



Figure 3- Existing site (2020)

Looking at the properties on Bersham Road, several materials can be seen. These range from white uPVC windows, doors and fascias; brickwork, stone, or rendered walls, and natural slated and tiled roofs. We have proposed windows, doors and fascias are to be constructed using good quality timber which is likely to be the original material used back in 1785.

Identifying proposed changes including assessing the impact and reasoning

The site is currently overgrown with unmaintained hedges and trees lining the front of the property. Trees are a frequent feature when driving down Bersham Road, which provide a natural screening for the houses along the street. It is our intention to retain as many trees as practicable on the site which will ensure the site remains in keeping with the area.

As previously mentioned, the cottages are to be reconstructed to bring the listed building back to life. The existing walls will be built up with brickwork which matched the existing cottages, to the same thickness and style that was used back in 1785. A new floor slab will have to be installed and an electro osmosis damp proof system to ensure the building remains useable for its lifetime. The

electro osmosis system will ensure no damp will rise in the building, which if left untreated could cause harm to the occupants. A new floor slab with underfloor heating will be provided to provide a warm, useable area for the guests of the holiday let.

The windows and doors which are proposed match that used in the original construction. As illustrated on drawing no. EL073/003, the glazing bars are in a diagonal pattern which provide a unique style in the vicinity.



Figure 4- Existing cottages

Whilst working along side the client, we were able to incorporate 2 bedrooms, lounge, bathroom, utility, and kitchen/ dining areas within the existing footprint. It was noted an important feature was to retain the existing chimney breasts as they were such an important feature within the original construction.

Policies

Policy EC4

Development proposals should provide for the conservation and management of hedgerows, trees, orchards, woodland, wildlife and other natural landscape and water features, and include new planting in order to enhance the character of the landscape and townscape. Development which results in the loss or significant damage to valuable trees, important hedgerows or ancient woodland sites will not be permitted.

An important feature within this proposal was to retain as many trees and hedgerows as feasible. As noted on the arboricultural impact assessment, several trees are of poor quality and are no loss to the environment. Where good quality trees are present on the site, they are to remain in situ to preserve the character of the site.

Policy EC5

Within Special Landscape Areas, priority will be given to the conservation and enhancement of the landscape. Development, other than for agriculture, small-scale farm-based and other rural enterprises, and essential operational development by utility service providers, will be strictly controlled. Development will be required to conform to a high standard of design and landscaping, and special attention will be paid to minimising its visual impact both from nearby and distant viewpoints.

By allowing the proposal to take place it will allow the enhancement of a since deteriorated listed building, to return to its former beauty. This in turn, will have a positive visual impact on the area as the existing parcel of land is unused and unkept.

Policy EC7

Within, and in close proximity to, conservation areas, the priority will be to preserve and/or enhance those buildings, structures, streets, trees, open spaces, archaeological remains, views, and other elements which contribute to the unique character of the area. New buildings and alterations or additions to existing buildings in conservation areas, whether listed as of special architectural or historic interest or not, must reflect the design and character of the area as a whole and the form, scale, detailing and materials of existing buildings.

The designs put forward reflect the scale, materials and character of both the area and the existing cottages. Traditional construction techniques/ materials are to be used such as; loose cut roof utilising rafters, purlins, and ridge beams, lime bases plaster for internal walls, ironmongery likely to

be seen on the original construction, cast iron gutters and downpipes, and reclaimed ridge tiles and slates.

Policy EC9

Alterations or additions to, and development or redevelopment within the curtilage of, buildings or structures listed as of special architectural or historic interest must respect the setting and character of the listed buildings or structures.

The proposal reflects the heritage of the existing building which once occupied the site.

Policy PS2

Development must not materially detrimentally affect countryside, landscape/townscape character, open space, or the quality of the natural environment.

As the proposal is to utilise the existing walls, the works would see a building which reflects what previously housed the site. With this in mind, we believe it does not materially detrimentally affect both the countryside, character, open space, or the quality of the natural environment.

Conclusion

The heritage asset has been properly identified and the significance of the asset and its setting. The proposed development has been developed to ensure there is a minimal impact on the asset.

Within Wrexham's Policy framework it should be noted paragraph 5.11: -

"The County Borough contains over 870 listed buildings of special architectural or historic interest. The emphasis must be on their sensitive repair and improvement, using traditional materials and techniques, and in establishing appropriate new uses for them in order to guarantee their future survival."

By allowing the proposal to reconstruct the listed building into a holiday let it will ensure the maintenance and future survival of the building is guaranteed.

The proposal will see a current unused and unkept listed building return to its former self, using construction methods likely used in the original construction. This would be seen as a contribution to

the area. The scale, aesthetics, positioning, and layout of the site has all been developed to ensure the development enhances the features of the listed building and conservation area. It is a vital aspect of the application to ensure we are improving the site and the conservation area.

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On behalf of Blueprint Architectural Services Ltd

1st February 2021