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Heritage Impact Statement **Rev B**



Statement prepared for:

Mr S Regan

The Lemon Tree,
29 Rhosddu Road,
Wrexham,
LL11 2LP.

Statement required for:

Proposed demolition of existing single storey extension and construction of new two storey extension to form additional bedrooms along with external staircase at The Lemon Tree, 29 Rhosddu Road, Wrexham, LL11 2LP.

Explaining Objectives

Our client's main objective with this project is to develop the building to its full potential whilst maintaining the visual impression of the street scene. The purpose of this application is to create additional accommodation for the hotel.

The current single storey extension to the hotel is to be demolished in order to construct a two storey extension housing the additional bedrooms. With the knowledge that The Lemon Tree is a Grade II listed building; the main goal is provide a more attractive extension, which is sympathetic to the original building.

To enable this building to be extended, some openings are required to be altered for access and internal layout. It is appreciated that altering openings can adjust the character of the existing structure. However, a balance has to be achieved otherwise the building will deteriorate and could go beyond a state of repair.

Understanding Significance

The Lemon Tree, formerly known as Abbotsfield Priory Hotel, was listed in January 1994; establishing its importance within the local area.

The building was originally built in 1863 as a dwelling for Mr. Edward Jones and remained as a residential home for many years. The architect, J. C. Gummow, designed the building in a neo-gothic style for Mr. Jones. In later years it became the Area Education Offices for Denbighshire and Clwyd County Councils.

In the 1970s, the building was sold on and converted to a hotel with restaurant named Abbotsfield Priory Hotel and has remained as this commercial use to this day. Even though the use has not changed since the 1970s; the name of the hotel has changed over the years due to change in owners.

The now named "The Lemon Tree" boasts tones of character. The main structure of the building is constructed out of large coursed and squared tooled sandstone walls with feature gables facing both Rhosddu and Grosvenor Roads. These gables are formed with very steep pitches to emphasise the grandness of the build. Each gable also includes gable copings with moulded kneelers. The roof finishes comprise of detailed slate coverings with scalloped bands finished with decorative ridge cresting.

Sandstone quoins are situated on the corners throughout the buildings (original and extensions) matching the existing stone colour. Other stone details can be found on the building such as a moulded scroll with the text "Trust in God" located above the main entrance door (see picture below) and the moulded gargoyles dotted around.

The windows to the original property have a vertical emphasis and usually found as a trefoiled mullioned style. Bay and dormer windows are present on both the two principal elevations; all of which have steep pitched roofs to match the gables and trefoiled windows. All these features throughout the original building accentuate the neo-gothic style envisioned by the architect J. C. Gummow.



Although the owners of this particular building may have changed hands over the years and had numerous different uses; the external appearance of the original building has had very little alterations.

However, since the building was originally constructed in 1863; various extensions have been added to the rear and side of the property. These extensions are modern in construction and have a rendered finish. Stonework quoins have been incorporated into the extensions with the slender window style matching the original building.

The existing extension, which we are intending to demolish, is constructed out of painted concrete panels with a felted flat roof structure. This is not a traditional construction method and is not in keeping with the rest of the buildings. We believe this extension was formerly built for functionality purposes only and no thought into external appearance was taken into account.

There is also a flat roofed extension linking The Lemon Tree restaurant with the accommodation and function room extensions. Again, it is thought that this was constructed purely for functionality purposes rather than attractiveness.

Identifying Proposed Changes including Assessing the Impact and Reasoning

The total internal floor area of the existing building is 659m². 111m² of this floor area is to be demolished to allow for the new extension. Although this could be considered as a significant area of existing building to demolish, the style of building which we are demolishing is not aesthetically pleasing and not in keeping with the original character.

The existing single storey extension holds a lounge/function room, couple of offices for the hotel staff and storages areas. The current owners are struggling to rent out the function room on a weekly basis and this area of the hotel is quickly becoming uneconomically viable. With these rooms being rarely used, they are becoming a burden on the current owners. Hence the reason to demolish this extension and construct a new two storey extension housing the much needed additional bedrooms.

We are proposing to construct a new extension in its place. This extension will be on a smaller footprint to allow for additional parking facilities. However, we are proposing to construct this as a two storey structure to accommodate additional bedrooms. By providing an extension on a smaller footprint will also ensure the new extension does not overpower the original attractiveness of The Lemon Tree and impede onto the adjacent highway.

The design for this extension has been heavily based on the existing neo-gothic style found on The Lemon Tree. We have incorporated steeped pitched roofs for the main structure on this extension with dormer windows to match. The main outlook of the extension will comprise of a rendered finish with sandstone gable wall ends integrated into the design. Although not the main material finish on the original building, a rendered finish can be found on the existing extensions and the rear of the original dwelling itself.

Stonework quoins are included in the design with coping stones and moulded kneelers to the gables facing the two roads. Incorporating these design features will ensure a continuation between existing and new is maintained.

One of the other main design features which we are intending to duplicate on the new extension is the windows. The tall, slim window style with the trefoiled design, are to be replicated with modern double glazed units installed within the frames. By fitting double glazed units into these windows will allow for a more thermally efficient building whilst keeping the external appearance at a high standard.

Another design feature, which has arisen following discussions with the Local Authority Building Control, is an external staircase. This external staircase is a requirement in order to comply with current means of escape regulations set out in Approved Document B – Fire Safety of the Building Regulations. Adhering to the Fire Safety regulations is vitally important and cannot be looked over.

The proposed staircase is to be constructed out of galvanised steel in a colour to match the new guttering and downpipes of the extension. By using galvanised steel will enable the staircase to be constructed on a slim lined basis. Therefore, this will not detract from the existing extension and the original listed building.

Positioning of the staircase has been decided to ensure that it has the least amount of impact of the original listed building. We have proposed the new staircase on the far left of the extension (alleyway to the side). This positioning ensures that the staircase is out of sight when looking from the roadside of Rhosddu Road.

Along with the two storey extension, we are also proposing a single storey extension to house the new disable toilet for the restaurant and provide a link between the extensions. This extension will be a continuation of the existing flat roof link extension wrapping around the corner of a two storey element.

The thought process for the design of this link extension was based on merging modern construction methods with the existing neo-gothic charm. Therefore, the intention is to provide floor to ceiling glazing to the corner on this extension with timber posts. As this extension is a continuation of the existing flat roof extension; we felt that trying to deliver traditional construction methods would be wrong course to take. By providing a different style of construction for this element of the build will ensure a clean break between old and new.

Conclusion

The works that are to be done on this building will enhance the appearance and reinstate the unique features throughout. Doing this work will allow this area of the site to become a functional use again with the characteristics of the original design.

The addition of the external staircase is a requirement in order to comply with current Building Regulations. Therefore, this element of the proposal is a necessity in order for our client to proceed with the previously approved extension Ref: P/2018/0641 & P/2018/0642.

As previously stated; the existing extension is not in keeping with the existing neo-gothic style and can be seen as an eyesore within the town. By supporting this application to demolish this extension and construct a new two storey extension will ensure that the existing building will not deteriorate and provide a more attractive building in its place. Therefore, improving the overall street scene.

There is no alteration works intended for the original listed building. The demolition and construction of the new extension works are proposed off the existing extensions. We believe this will enable Wrexham Council to look favourably on this application as these buildings are of a minor importance compared to the main neo-gothic structure.

Document Prepared by:
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