

DELEGATED REPORT

Application No:	P/23/0033
Site Address:	Bethania Chapel Aberfan Road Aberfan Merthyr Tydfil
Development:	Replace roof to include new solar panels and install new windows and doors
Case Officer:	Marlene Ferreira
Site Visit:	23rd February 2023
Application Expiry Date:	19th June 2023
Consultation reply date expired:	9th March 2023

APPLICATION SITE

The application site relates to a large detached building known as Bethania Chapel, located off Aberfan Road in Aberfan. The relatively modern red brick building comprises an irregular roof design. Whilst mainly flat roof, it features a mono-pitched roof section with a separate 'tower' like segment to the front of the building, but does not possess any special or historic character or features. The building has a 'tired' appearance and appears unmaintained, having been vacant since 2007.

The site is bound by an adopted highway to the north, the main Aberfan Road to the east, a rear adopted lane to the west and a vacant and overgrown parcel of land to the south.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

This application seeks planning permission to renovate the building to include the installation of a new roof, the addition of solar panels and the installation of new windows and doors.

The existing grey fibre cement slate roof would be replaced with new fibre cement roof tiles. The existing grey felt flat roof would be replaced with a fleece-lined EDMF, also grey in colour. An array of solar panels, each measuring 1.7x1.1 metres, would be installed on the mono-pitched roof area. These would project a total of 0.03 metres above the roof plane. All existing wooden windows and doors, painted in black, would be replaced with new black Ali Vu aluminium casement windows and doors.

The works are required in order to provide a useable and energy efficient building which can be opened back up to the local community for use as a church and community facility.

PLANNING HISTORY

The Council's records do not indicate any other recent or relevant planning history for this site.

CONSULTATION

Ecology Officer - No objection.

PUBLICITY

In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012, letters were sent to adjoining occupiers. No letters of representations have been received as a result of this publicity exercise.

POLICY CONTEXT

National Development Framework

- Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (February 2021)

National Planning Policies

- Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11, February 2021)

Local Planning Policies

- Merthyr Tydfil Replacement local Development Plan 2016-2031

Policy SW4 – Settlement Boundaries

Policy SW11 – Sustainable Design and Placemaking

Policy EnW1 – Nature Conservation and Ecosystem Resilience

Policy EcW8 – Renewable Energy

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

SPG Note No. 4 – Sustainable Design (2013)

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The issues to consider under the assessment of this application relate to whether the proposed development would be acceptable in principle in this location and whether it would result in an acceptable form of development with regards to its impact upon the character and appearance of the premises and the wider street scene. The impact upon residential amenity and ecology are also important considerations.

Principle of development

The application site lies within the settlement boundary – Other Growth Areas. New development in such areas is supported by LDP Policy SW4 provided it complies with other relevant planning policies.

Given the nature of development, LDP Policy EnW8 is also relevant. This policy states that the use of renewable energy will be supported as a means of reducing local carbon footprint.

The proposed development is therefore supported in principal and would comply with LDP Policies SW4 and EnW8. Indeed, the building appears in a state of disrepair and the proposed renovation works, which would enable the building to be re-open to the public, would therefore be welcomed.

Character and visual amenity

The existing windows and door are wooden and generally a like for like replacement would be encouraged. The proposed aluminium windows and door, which would also differ from their existing designs, would amount to an acceptable replacement given their slimline appearance. Furthermore, they would be black aluminium and would be mounted within the existing window openings. As such, the alterations would not be detrimental to the appearance of this modern building. Likewise, it would not detract from the character and appearance of the wider area where the window and door finishes are largely made up of varying UPVc designs. Similarly, the replacement of the existing roof tiles with like for like roof tiles and the replacement of the grey felt roof with a grey fleece-lined EDMF would be acceptable.

In respect of the solar roof panels, these would be located on the mono-pitched roof section of the building to the rear of the site. Although the solar panels would project above the mono-pitched roof by approximately 0.03 metres, their siting would make them almost unnoticeable when travelling along the main Aberfan Road. Whilst they would be visible from other parts of the immediate area, in particular the rear lane, they would not cause any significant harm to the appearance of the building. Instead, the solar panels would appear fitting to the modern and irregular design of the chapel and would therefore be acceptable in this instance. The proposed development would therefore accord with Policy SW11 of the LDP.

Residential Amenity

The proposal has been considered in respect of its impact upon surrounding neighbouring occupiers. However, given the nature and siting of the development and its distance from neighbouring properties, the proposal would not cause any harm upon the surrounding residential amenity. In this respect, no representations were received following the publicity exercise. The relationship between the proposed development and the neighbouring dwellings would therefore be considered acceptable and would accord with LDP Policy SW11.

Ecology

Given the nature of the proposed works, which includes the removal and replacement of the existing roof, the Council's Ecologist requested that a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) be submitted in support of the application. The PRA report, *Bethania Chapel, Aberfan, Merthyr Tydfil, Potential Roost Assessment 2023, Mitigation and Enhancements. Revision V.1.2, Date issued 23/06/2023*, was received on 23rd June 2023. It has been reviewed by the Council's Ecologist who has not raised any concerns with the mitigation and enhancement works proposed. As such, provided the proposed development is

carried out in accordance with the recommendations of the report, it would accord with LDP Policy EnW1.

CONCLUSION

The development, for the reasons noted above, is acceptable and in compliance with relevant policies and guidance.

Finally, the duty to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, under section 3 of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ("the WBFG Act") has been taken into consideration when determining this application. In reaching the following recommendation, the ways of working set out at section 5 of the WBFG Act have been considered and thus the proposal is in accordance with the sustainable development principle through its contribution towards one or more of the Welsh Ministers well-being objectives set out as required by section 8 of the WBFG Act.

Accordingly the following recommendation is made:

RECOMMENDATION: BE APPROVED subject to the following **CONDITIONS:**

1. The development shall begin not later than five years from the date of this decision.

Reason - To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

- Drawing no: hdw/ph/bt.03, received: 5th April 2024;
- Drawing no: hdw/ph/bt.04, received: 5th April 2024;
- Section details: Job: Q3755-23 Bethania Chapel, 001, 002, 003, 004, 005, 006, 007, 008, 009, 010, 011, 012, 012, received: 10th February 2023;
- JAM54S30 390-415/MR Series, received: 24th April 2023;
- Rubberbond EPDM Roofing System brochure, received: 31st January 2023;
- Bethania Chapel, Aberfan, Merthyr Tydfil, Potential Roost Assessment and Bat Presence Absence Survey 2023 and Enhancements Revision V.1.2, Date issued 23/06/2023, received: 23rd June 2023.

Reason -To ensure compliance with the approved plans and clearly define the scope of the permission.

INFORMATIVES

1. This planning permission does not provide consent to undertake works that require a European Protected Species (EPS) licence.

All bats and their roosts are protected under UK and European legislation. It is an offence to deliberately kill, injure, capture or disturb a bat or to recklessly damage or destroy their breeding sites or resting places.

If works are planned on a building/tree in which bats are found to be roosting, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) must be contacted. on 0300 065 3000 or at <https://naturalresources.wales/permits-and-permissions/species-licensing/apply-for-a-protected-species-licence/bat-licences/?lang=en>.

If work has already commenced and bats are found, or if any evidence that bats are using the site as a roost is found, work should cease and NRW should be contacted immediately.

Under these circumstances, an EPS licence is likely to be required to undertake the works within the law.

2. All birds, their nests and eggs are protected by law under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) while they are breeding.

If works to any trees, hedgerows and/or other nesting bird habitat (including buildings with suitable features) are to be undertaken, they will take place outside of the bird nesting season. If the works must be undertaken during the nesting season (generally from 1st March until 31st August, although birds are known to nest outside of these dates in suitable conditions), a breeding bird survey will be required and must be carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist. Any active nests identified will be protected until the young have fledged.

Where a Schedule 1 species (as defined in the Wildlife and Countryside Act - <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69/schedule/1> is involved, compensation for impacts, e.g., loss of nesting sites, will be devised and implemented.

RECOMMENDATION ENDORSED


Director of Neighbourhood Services

P.P.

DATE: 30.06.2023