

Consultation Details

Consultee: Peter Thomas
Case Officer: Kate Glover
Application No: P-25-0308
Application Type: Listed Building Consent
Site Address: Joseph Parry Cottage 4 Chapel Row Georgetown Merthyr Tydfil CF48 1BN
Description of Works: Installation of a ventilation system and refurbishment of Joseph Parry Cottage including, sand blast floor and ceiling, decorate the walls, new rear door, new accessible toilet, new vinyl floor, refurbish all windows including secondary glazing and new re-lay flag stones
Grade: II

Recommendation(s)

☒	No objection	☐	Notes for applicant
☐	Object (Holding objection)	☐	Request for further information
☐	Object and recommend refusal	☒	Recommend conditions

Relevant Legislation and Policy Context

This consultation response has been prepared in the context of the duties placed upon the local planning authority by the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 ("TCPA 1990") and the Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2023 ("HEWA 2023").

Section 96(2) of the HEWA 2023

"In considering whether to grant listed building consent, a planning authority or the Welsh Ministers must have special regard to the desirability of preserving—

- (a) the listed building to which the application relates,
- (b) the setting of the building and
- (c) any features of special architectural or historic interest the building possesses."

Section 314A(1) of the TCPA 1990

"In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the Welsh Ministers or a local planning authority in Wales must have special regard to the desirability of preserving—

- (a) the listed building,
- (b) the setting of the building, or
- (c) any features of special architectural or historic interest the building possesses."

Section 160(1) of the HEWA 2023

"In exercising a planning function in relation to a building or other land in a conservation area, a person must have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area."

Note - this is the starting point for assessment of all applications relating to listed buildings and conservation areas

The above raises two primary questions:

1. Would the development affect the historic asset or its setting (and, if so, in what way and to what extent)? and,
2. Would the identified effect preserve (or enhance) the historic asset, in the context of the statutory duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving it?

The Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Ltd Court of Appeal judgment in 2014 contains important findings which have direct implications for casework where a listed building or its setting is affected or where it involves a building or other land in a conservation area. It held that despite the slight difference in wording, the nature of the duty in relation to listed buildings and conservation areas is the same and that a decision-maker, having found harm to a heritage asset, must give that harm “considerable importance and weight”.

Your report should expressly acknowledge the need, if harm has been found, to give considerable weight to the presumption that preservation is desirable and demonstrate that this has been done. Otherwise, it would not reflect the duty under s314A TCPA 1990 or s161 HEWA 2023. How that balance will be performed will depend on the factors in the case, but it will always be important to recognise the special status which s314A TCPA 1990 or s161 HEWA 2023 confers upon the relevant relationship with heritage assets and conservation areas.

National Policy

National policy is provided in Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Edition 12, which sets out a presumption in favour of the conservation of the historic environment (Chapter 6). This is supplemented by Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment (TAN 24), which requires that any harm to a listed building must be convincingly justified and that alterations must be the minimum necessary and avoid adverse impact on special interest (paras 5.11–5.15).

Relevant guidance from Cadw, including Conservation Principles and Managing Change to Listed Buildings, has been used to inform this assessment where appropriate.

Assessment of Significance

The application relates to 4 Chapel Row, a Grade II listed building, designated for being the birthplace in 1841 of the famous composer Joseph Parry.

In line with Cadw’s Conservation Principles, the building’s significance has been assessed in the comprehensive Heritage Impact Assessment. There is no reason to disagree with the findings of that assessment.

Elements Affected by the Proposed Works

The proposed works will impact the following elements of the building and/or its setting:

- Historic fabric, including penetrations to walls, ceilings and roof to accommodate new heating, ventilation ductwork, grilles and associated services.
- Roofscape and rear elevation, through the insertion of slate ventilators and alterations to the rear wall fabric.

These elements contribute positively to the significance of the heritage asset.

Assessment of Impact

The building currently suffers from poor thermal performance and inadequate environmental control, which adversely affects staff working conditions, visitor comfort and the conservation of the building fabric and museum displays. Without intervention, fluctuating temperature and humidity levels increase the risk of deterioration to historic materials and limit the building's effective use as a public museum.

The proposed heating, ventilation and associated refurbishment works are necessary to address these deficiencies in a sensitive and proportionate manner. The scheme has been designed to minimise physical intervention, avoid key areas of significance and concentrate changes in secondary spaces, concealed locations and areas of modern fabric. Where historic fabric is affected, impacts are localised, reversible where possible and comparable to existing modern interventions.

Importantly, the works will enable the continued viable use of the building as a museum, directly supporting its communal and historical value as the birthplace of Joseph Parry and as a focal point for interpreting Merthyr Tydfil's industrial heritage. This aligns with the principle that the best way to secure the future of a listed building is through appropriate and sustainable use.

The impact on evidential value will be limited, as the works (such as service penetrations and fixings) involve minor and localised interventions to the historic fabric, which are, it is contended are largely comparable to existing modern additions. These interventions are reversible and avoid the principal areas of significance, particularly the primary façade and key historic spaces.

There will be no harm to historical value, as the proposals do not affect the building's form, plan, or its strong associative significance as the birthplace of Joseph Parry. The building's ability to convey its historical and cultural associations will be fully retained.

The impact on aesthetic value will be mixed but overall neutral. While some modern fixtures will be introduced internally and discreetly to the roof and rear elevation, these will be visually unobtrusive and confined to secondary elevations or concealed locations. The associated refurbishment works will improve the building's condition and presentation, enhancing legibility and appreciation of historic features.

The proposals are expected to have a positive effect on communal value, as improved environmental conditions will support the building's continued use as a museum, enhancing visitor comfort, accessibility and long-term sustainability.

The proposals are considered to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building and support its ongoing viable use, in accordance with national and local heritage policy.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The proposed works have been assessed in relation to their impact on the special architectural or historic interest of the listed building. In accordance with Technical Advice Note 24 and Planning Policy Wales, there is a presumption in favour of preserving listed buildings and their features of special interest.

The works would result in some harm; however, the justification is clear and proportionate and the works are considered to be the minimum necessary to achieve the stated aims. On this basis, the proposals are acceptable in heritage terms.

Conditions

Prior to their installation, full details of all new fixtures and fittings (including ventilation grilles, diffusers, heaters, slate ventilators, secondary glazing and any new doors or joinery) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority.

Reason:

To preserve the special interest of the listed building.

A method statement shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority for any works involving penetration of historic fabric (including walls, roofs and ceilings), setting out how damage will be minimised and how fabric will be protected during installation.

Reason:

To preserve the special interest of the listed building.

All repair and refurbishment works shall use materials and finishes that match the existing historic fabric in type, colour, texture and profile, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Planning Authority.

Reason:

To preserve the special interest of the listed building.

All new services and installations shall, where practicable, be installed in a reversible manner, allowing for future removal without permanent damage to historic fabric.

Reason:

To preserve the special interest of the listed building.

During works, all historic floors, walls, staircases, fireplaces and other significant features shall be adequately protected from damage.

Reason:

To preserve the special interest of the listed building.

Any previously concealed historic fabric revealed during the works shall be recorded photographically and reported to the Planning Authority, with proposals for its retention and treatment agreed before further works proceed.

Reason:

To preserve the special interest of the listed building.