

Conservation is about the careful management of change. This means understanding the implications of any proposed change - from deciding what to do and how to do it, to deciding whether or not to give consent.

The plans, elevations and bill of quantities provided as part of the application for listed building consent provide full supporting information illustrating the existing building and showing how the proposals will change or enhance the listed building. The Summary Heritage Impact Assessment (H.I.A.) further evaluates these works measured against the impact categories of positive impact, neutral impact, negative impact, and negative impact with set off.

The H.I.A. aims to give decision makers the information needed to understand the reasons for the proposal and to weigh up the risks and benefits.

### **The Proposals & Objectives**

The change proposed at High Street Chapel Hall will include repair, renewal, restoration and reconstruction, new work, improved insulation, reduced energy costs, alteration, and demolition all combined in a specific client brief to provide additional toilet facilities and restore the School Room annex of the Neo-Classical original host Chapel and the Art Décor Hall to their original as built design and condition. The two 'pavilions' will be joined by the rebuilding of the post war toilet annex as a modern 2020's link building subordinate to and which does not detract from the two main pavilions of differing architectural style. (Note the School Room annex does not contain any specific neo-classical features which are reserved for the main entrance elevation).

### **Impact.**

Within the impact categories the majority of the proposed work headings score positive or neutral. However, the following work headings are identified as possibly requiring further explanation to confirm their inclusion in the conservation policy as principles of good design that will sustain and enhance the historic asset in the most appropriate way to accommodate change. They explain what the proposed works are intended to achieve and why they are desirable or necessary as set out in the Design Notes 1 to 6.

Design Note 1: Low Pitch & Long Rafter Roof over School Room & Toilets.

Design Note 2: Flat Roof with Lantern Lights over Toilet Block.

Design Note 3: Velux Sun Tunnels or Conservation Roof Lights.

Design Note 4: Replacement Windows.

Design Note 5: External Render Specification.

Design Note 6: Internal Insulation.

### **Design Note 1: Low Pitch & Long Rafter Roof over School Room & Toilets.**

The letter / reports sent to the clients dated the 05.11.2020 & 15.11.2020, and 09.11.2020 & 15.11.2020 together with the attachments titled 'Axonometric of Rainfall on Rear Roof' and 'Tiling Tips: No.15 Long Rafter Lengths' identify and explain the water entry caused by defective roof design.

The concrete roof tile is a modern roofing material with a 'negative' conservation impact. The roof over the School Room & Toilets was new it was our opinion if we were acting as a 'conservation officer' that the concrete tile and low pitch cat slide roof would need to be replaced in a slate roof finish.

Further investigations as set out in the letter / report dated 09.11.2020 & 15.11.2020 established additional technical reasons why this 16.9 degree (below 17.5 degree) low pitch roof finished in interlocking concrete tiles built as a catslide from the original ridge of the school room spanning over the toilet block on a bastardised timber construction was in addition to its non-compliance with good conservation practice was also not compliant with building regulations and good building practice and thus needed to be removed

The existing cat slide roof thus has both a technical and conservation negative impact and is detrimental to the restoration of the original chapel school room – the historic asset. Consequently the 'conserve as seen' conservation policy proffered by the LPA is not applicable as it does not support the correct use of conservation materials, conservation aesthetics and / or good building practice.

The design solution chosen is to re-establish the 30-degree pitch Welsh slate roof over the school room, suitably reinforced with a bottom ceiling chord spanning to original wall plate positions.

#### **Design Note 2: Flat Roof with Lantern Lights over Toilet Block.**

The additional toilet facilities have been created by improved space planning achieved by straightening the corridor linking the chapel and hall, moving the hall door 2m to line with the entry door into the chapel and the demolition of the lower portion of the east wall of the school room.

The main chapel is built in the Neo-Classical style, which further sub divides into Temple, Palladian, and Classical Block style all built with strong horizontal and vertical lines. The Chapel front has such a horizontal and vertical emphasis and reads from the High Street as a flat roofed building having a flat roof behind the pediment to achieve the neo-classical design. In Neo-Classical architecture, which is characterised by clarity of form, sober colours shallow spaces the pitched roof is not often of primary visual importance. A feature of Neo-Classical architecture is often the flat roofed horizontal colonnades linking blocks or pavilions of the building.

The rear building is a fine example of a 1920's Art Décor building originally built as a detached block but now joined to the school room annex of the neo-classical main chapel by the kitchen infill extension.

With the School Room annex of the Neo-Classical original host chapel and the Art Décor Hall restored to their original as built design and massing and connected by the toilet block. It was not considered correct to set the elevations of the toilet block either in Neo-classical or Art Décor style, but rather allow the toilet block to stand alone as a modern 2020's era understated link characterised by simple form and sober colours finished in painted render to match and blend with the two main blocks or pavilions.

Within the limitations of the re-established symmetry of the pitched school room roof two solutions to roof the toilet block presented for consideration: -

- Either, as a 30-degree slate pitch roof, hip cut onto the school room roof.

The slate hip end roof is considered a powerful statement, perhaps too full of its own importance which could create an overbearing effect detracting from the two main host buildings.

- Or a flat roof finished in lead or fibre glass.

The flat roof designed with lantern rooflights having the added advantage of providing natural daylight into both male and female toilets. The design preference is a lead roll flat roof. Unfortunately lead needed to be discounted as a roof finish due to the potential of theft.

The preferred solution was to rebuild the new toilet annex as a modern 2020 era single storey flat roofed link with lantern lights, a solution which does not detract from the massing, roofscape and architectural styles of the two main pavilions. The flat roof scheme is also some 15K cheaper to build.

Unfortunately, the flat roof option was not seen to be acceptable by the LPA – no explanations have been received. The scheme submitted for listed building consent is the pitched roof solution as illustrated on the attached drawings

We have previously submitted the pitched roof solution discussed above but have not received any specific feedback from the LPA who continue to show preference for the retention of the catslide roof. The LPA requirement to conserve the building as found and retain the low-pitched long rafter concrete tiled catslide roof has a negative technical and conservation impact on the historic asset and is thus not applicable to the application. The restoration of the school room roof is a huge positive impact supported by the subordinate understated design of the flat roof link.



External View of Lantern Light – Typical. Not part of the current submission.

### **Design Note 3: Velux Sun Tunnels or Conservation Roof Lights.**

To comply with the client brief to reduce energy costs, maximisation of natural daylight was identified as a key consideration.

The consultation report verbally received from Cadw considered rooflights unacceptable on the front or rear elevation of the building and suggested that artificial lighting should be utilised instead. From later correspondence it was our understanding that 'conservation rooflights' could be used.

Velux Conservation Roof-lights or Velux Sun Tunnels - the installation and impact of rooflights and or roof sun tunnels was considered for the following reasons:

The introduction of Velux Sun Tunnels:

- Minimises lighting energy costs by introducing natural daylight.

Good use of natural daylight and the installation of energy efficient lights are estimated to produce an 80% energy saving in lighting costs.

- Gives a balanced internal and external design appearance – see attached sun tunnel product illustrations.

Internally the sun tunnel presents as a dome or ceiling light fitting with a far less obtrusive interior compared with the vertical plasterboard shaft required to be formed from rooflight to ceiling line which also breaks and reduces the effectiveness of the insulation layer. The sun tunnel will have less impact on the building internally.

Externally the Sun Tube measuring 462 x 462 mm presents as a circular glass aperture within the square rooflight set level with the face of the slate thus minimising visual intrusion.



Sun Tunnel External View.

Sun Tunnel Internal View

Although the Velux Sun Tunnel is a relatively new building component with limited history of usage on which to assess its potential advantages or disadvantages to building conservation it is difficult to comprehend why sun tunnels or rooflights are seen as unacceptable (notwithstanding that conservation rooflights may be acceptable). Patent roof glazing in slate roofs has long been a feature of historical buildings since glass was invented and roof lighting should not be set aside based on a subjective predetermined conservation opinion; or sun tunnels precluded for the reason of being a new building component.

A roof must be seen as a multi-functional part of the building envelope keeping rain out but letting light in. It is not reasonable to expect owners of listed buildings to set aside the free use of natural light and hence reduced operational energy costs. Such a negative policy apart from being contradictory to modern energy / carbon saving policy also has a huge negative impact on the future operation and extended life of this and all historic buildings

#### **Design Note 4: Replacement Windows.**

**Replacement Windows to Hall:** The original windows remain only in the north wall of the building and confirm pattern and size of timber section. The hall windows were originally ventilated with a low-level horizontal sliding sash which may have leaked from the day it was installed. The windows have subsequently been screwed up, sealed, and painted over and currently do not ventilate the room.

The existing windows in the south elevation are poor modern replacements and badly decayed.

The replacement windows are detailed using the same size of timber and overall pattern but using a low-level top hung opening casement to the middle lower sash. This being the total ventilation the client deems necessary, although the two adjacent side sashes can be made as opening lights all within a suitable height for hand operation.

Trickle ventilation is also proposed along with double glazing, omitting the leaded lights.

Existing and Proposed Window Details have been submitted.

#### **Replacement Box Sash Window to School Room & New Box Sash Window to Kitchen:**

The timber in the box sash window to the school room is decayed, with sashes painted over and sealed shut. To be replaced as a facsimile box sash window. Neutral impact.

The kitchen infill building was fenestrated with a S.W. casement window of circa 1960's design which is completely out of character to both the Neo-Classical and Art Décor architectural styles. It is proposed to enlarge the wall opening and instal a box sash window to match the adjacent school room window. Positive impact.

#### **Design Note 5: External Render Specification.**

Cadw have advised against the use of Portland cement render advising that the building should be re-rendered in lime mortar presumed to be a non-hydraulic lime.

Although the use of lime render is seen by the historic building bodies as a corner stone of conservation policy, we remain concerned at the effectiveness of lime render to prevent the ingress of damp through a solid masonry wall, especially on the southwest storm elevation. We would have preferred to explore the effectiveness of a Revlane Siloxane Ignifuge render on external insulation.

In the knowledge that at this juncture the non-use of lime render is an unwinnable conservation argument we confirm that it is proposed to render in a NH5 lime render finished in a harling topcoat to match the existing render and insulate internally as set out in Design Note 6 below.

Or a Sika system as set out in attached notes.

#### **Design Note 6: Internal Insulation.**

Cadw have advised that external wall insulation would be unacceptable on a listed building and as such, we are required to look at other forms of insulation, such as insulating the cavity wall inside the building.

While we fully acknowledge that the insulation of a listed building needs careful detailing to preserve the original design, it remains a concern that along with natural daylight insulation is seen as an unnecessary upgrade on a listed building. The LPA are seemingly looking to insulate within a cavity and although we initially thought the external wall was of cavity construction, further physical investigation leads us to conclude that the hall is of solid masonry wall construction.

We have detailed and explored alternative solutions to insulate both externally and internally. The original Art Décor Hall interior is of equal and possibly of more conservation importance than the exterior.

Taking into consideration the comments of the Cadw inspector on external insulation combined with our own design evaluation we propose to insulate internally without loss or impact on the Art Décor interior. The internal walls will be lined with 65 mm Kingspan K118 composite plasterboard and insulation and the ornamental plaster cornice and vertical plaques on the pilasters re-run in Gypsum plaster. This will have a de-minis effect on the Art Décor interior, widening piers from 120 x 500 mm to 120 mm deep x 668 mm wide to accommodate a 65 mm combined plasterboard and insulation lining.

We propose to run a high-level ventilation strip around the walls behind the cornice to ventilate the ingress of damp which will probably remain with the re-render with lime mortar. The relevant details have been submitted as shown on drawing numbers 13, 14 & 16. The switch of the insulated panels from outside to inside deprives the works of an additional waterproofing skin under the lime render.

## **Conclusion.**

The proposals do not affect the evidential value of the historic asset but bring about a great improvement with limited material and little visual loss and limited damage to the fabric. Overall, the reinstatement of the buildings to their as built design will restore the aesthetic and design qualities of the historic asset with limited amendment to layout scale and proportion and replacement of historic detail and craftsmanship.

There will however be loss of physical evidence of how the building has changed over time, although much of the physical change has been detrimental to the building.

The proposals greatly increase the community value as the refurbished building will act as a faith centre adjacent to the new bus station.

The proposals will greatly decrease energy costs through increased insulation, low energy lighting and reduced heating costs. Parallel with the building refurbishment the existing boilers are to be replaced with a new energy efficient boiler to serve both the chapel and the hall.

The heritage impact assessment identifies the most appropriate way to accommodate change. It sets out the proposed works, what they are intended to achieve and why they are desirable and necessary.

The heritage impact assessment shows that we have taken the significance of the asset into account. The statement of significance is fully discussed in the previously submitted heritage impact statement.

The heritage impact statement describes the proposals and includes design principles and concepts including a brief schedule of works which gives enough information about the proposed work to enable an informed decision to be made.

A bill of quantities is also prepared which describes the works in full. To be updated.

The heritage impact assessment demonstrates that we have considered the potential impact of the preferred approach showing how the proposed work will sustain and enhance the historic asset bringing potential benefits and no harm through high quality design making a positive contribution to the heritage value of the historic asset and its setting. Unfortunately the setting of the listed building has been greatly impacted by the incongruous hard landscaping of the adjacent paving's in Chinese granite sets laid out in an abstract form emanating from the new bus station.

The heritage impact statement shows that the application has considered a range of options to meet the requirements and explains why we have chosen the preferred option.

There is no offsetting of impact and full access for all users remains unimpeded.