

Application No.
P/15/0198

Date
12th June 2015

Determining Authority
MTCBC

Proposed Development

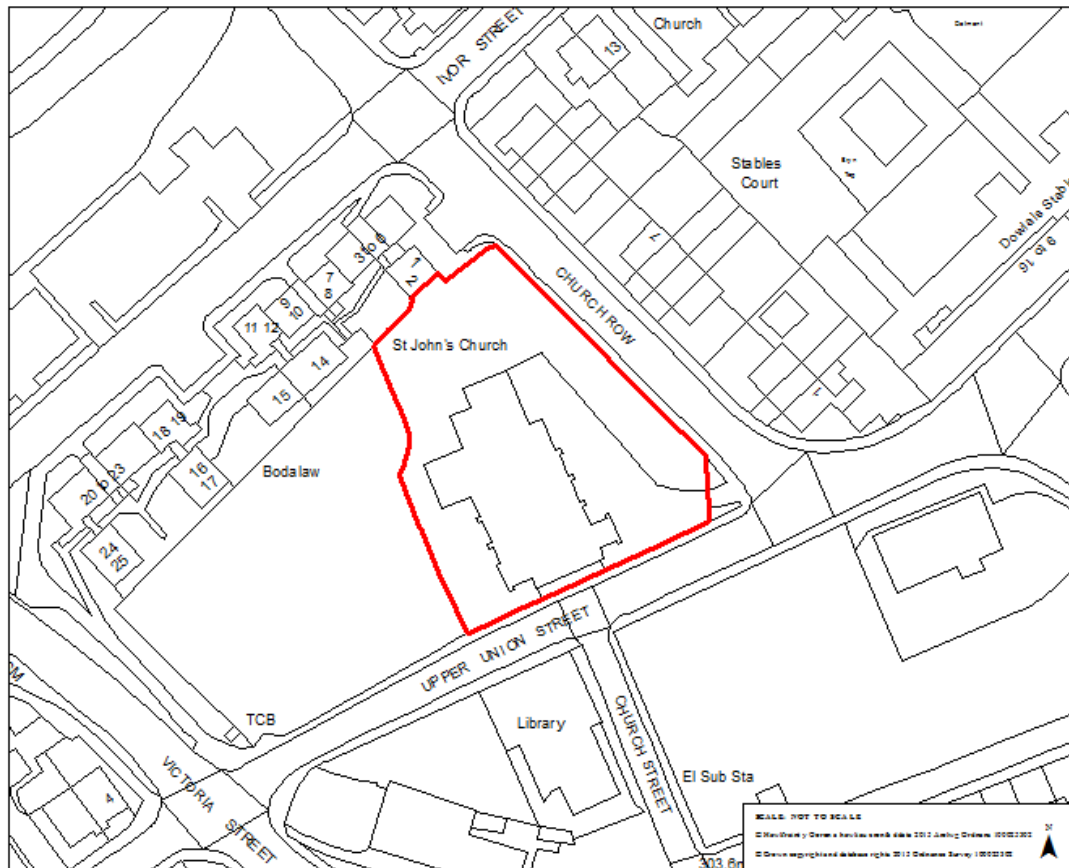
Location

Name & Address of Applicant/Agent

Internal alterations and repairs, retention of eastern bay, addition of rooflights, windows and addition of 2 No. new roof ventilators (Renewal of Listed Building Consent P/09/0303)

St Johns Church
Upper Union Street
Dowlais
Merthyr Tydfil
CF48 3LE

Graft Ltd
c/o Page & Dean
Consulting Ltd
C/o Mr Richard Dean
Old St Peters, St Peters
Crescent
Peterstone
Cardiff



APPLICATION SITE

The application relates to the Grade II Listed St. John's Church within Dowlais Conservation Area. The building is listed as a historic parish church, demonstrating strong linkages with Dowlais Ironworks and the Guest family, and has a high group value with Dowlais Stables and Dowlais Public Library. The building is set on the corner of Upper Union Street (to the south) and Church Row (to the east). The site is also bound by vacant land to the south-west and flats to the north-west which front onto Ivor Street.

St. John's Church was built in 1873 in a Victorian Gothic style and its western porch is the burial place of Sir Josiah John Guest, who owned Dowlais Iron Works up until his death in 1852. His tomb was moved to the Church following its construction, and is located within its northern vestry.

The building is constructed of rock-faced rubble stone, containing ashlar dressings, largely of Bath stone. A large aisle of blue pennant stone makes up the majority of the building with a number of windows and porches and a Gothic style turret to the south west. The building is signified by its steep pitched roof, viewable from a distance.

The interior of the building, though largely deteriorated contains an arcade of rounded columns with large pointed arches. A number of features of interest are still located within the building including a memorial plaque to Sir John Josiah Guest as well as plaques dedicated to other mine workers. A large stained glass miners' window forms part of the building's historic interest.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Permission is sought for the renewal of a Listed Building Consent (P/09/0303) to carry out internal and external alterations to the building, which facilitate its change of use to 20 apartments.

External Alterations

The external works would largely consist of the formation of a number of new openings. A total of 36 new 'Lumen' rooflights would be added to the building, 22 of which would be added to the south elevation and 14 to the north elevation. Six new quatrefoil windows would be added to the vestry walls of the building, one of which would be added to the west elevation and five to the north elevation. These would be of approximately 1480mm in height and width.

A number of current openings would be extended and elongated by 1820mm in matching Bath Stone to produce light for internal rooms, including two arched windows on the north elevation and one on the south elevation. Two small ventilation towers would be added to the roof pitch, consisting of an oak framed structure with slate louvers and copper finials. The works would also facilitate the repair of the roof using Welsh natural slate tiles, limestone repairs to external walls and repairs to window glazing and frames.

A parking area would be incorporated around the eastern grounds of the building allowing for 20 parking spaces. This would be surfaced in compacted hardcore with loose grey chippings. An oak close boarded refuse compound would be located within the parking area and a number of specimen trees would be retained.

Internal Alterations

Floors would be added to the building by means of an internal mezzanine structure, which would not be attached to the original internal faces of the building. The structure would be partitioned appropriately to provide facilities for 20 separate apartments (14 flats and 6

maisonettes) all containing one bedroom, bathroom and sitting room each. An 8 person lift is proposed within the floor structure, its associated plant room and four storage rooms.

A void is proposed to be kept on the southern side of the building exposing the entire window to the southern elevation and would be used as a publicly accessible area displaying some exemplar remaining pews, a number of relocated commemorative plaques, the Lady Chapel screen and the font. A memorial tomb within the northern vestry of the building is also proposed to be kept, displaying the John Josiah Guest memorial mural and pulpit. The original chancel steps would run alongside this mural.

PLANNING HISTORY

- P/15/0197 - Change of use of church into 20 No apartments with associated internal and external works (Renewal of Planning Permission P/11/0031).
Currently under consideration.
- P/12/0263 - Temporary siting of 1 No. residential caravan.
REFUSED permission on 26.11.2012
- P/11/0031 - Change of use of church into 20 No. apartments including internal alterations and repairs, retention of eastern bay, addition of rooflights, windows and 2 No. new roof ventilators.
Permission GRANTED on 30.06.2011
- P/09/0303/LB- Internal alterations and repairs, retention of eastern bay, addition of rooflights, windows and addition of 2 No. new roof ventilators.
Listed building CONSENT granted on 15.06.2010
- P/99/0403 - Removal of items and features, extension of time period for implementation of previous consent P/98/0482.
Listed building CONSENT granted on 21.02.2000
- P/98/0482 - To remove stained glass windows for safe keeping and eventual incorporation into All Saints Church, Dowlais.
Listed building CONSENT granted on 01.04.1999

CONSULTATION

The following society groups were consulted as part of the application process. Their comments are summarised below:

- Civic Trust for Wales - No response.
- Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust - No response.

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| The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings | - | No response. |
| The Ancient Monument Society | - | No response. |
| Royal Commission on The Ancient & Historical Monuments of Wales | - | No response. |
| The Victorian Society (South Wales) | - | No response. |

PUBLICITY

In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2012, letters were sent to adjoining properties on the 17th June 2015, three site notices were displayed within the vicinity of the site on the 23rd June 2015. A press notice was also displayed in the local newspaper on the 25th June 2015. It is noted that the consultation period does not expire until the 16th July 2015.

At the time of writing this report no representations have been received as a result of this publicity exercise. In the event that any representations are received after this report is finalised, they will be verbally reported to Committee.

POLICY CONTEXT

National planning policy

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) 7th edition, July 2014:

Section 6.5 recognises the importance of protecting the historic environment.

Paragraph 6.5.9 states that:

“Where a development proposal affects a Listed Building or its setting, the primary material consideration is the statutory requirement to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building, or its setting, or any features of special architectural interest which it possesses”

Paragraph 6.5.15 states that if any proposed development would conflict with the objective of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area, or its setting, there will be a strong presumption against the grant of planning permission.

Para 9.3.3 warns that the cumulative effects of development, including conversion should not be allowed to damage an area’s character and amenity.

Welsh Office Circular 61/96 “Planning the Historic environment” Part 1 Para II: the Setting of Listed Buildings”

Part 1 Para 11 reiterates Sections 16 and 66 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in requiring Local Planning Authorities, when considering applications for works affecting listed buildings to have regard to their character and setting.

Part 1 Para 12 addresses the change of use of historic buildings. This states that new uses may be the key to the preservation of a building and reaffirms that planning matters should be exercised sympathetically where it would enable a historic building to be given a new lease of life.

Part 2 Para 30 acknowledges that Conservation Areas include buildings which make little or no contribution to its character and appearance; therefore it is important that change to these buildings should be designed to respect the Context of the Conservation Area.

Local planning policy

Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan (LDP) 2006-2021:

Policy BW6 (Townscape and Built Heritage) of the Local Development Plan states that:

“The Council will protect and support the enhancement of the unique built heritage of the County Borough. Development proposals will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated they would preserve or enhance the architectural quality, character and setting of any of the following:

- *Listed Buildings;*
- *Scheduled Ancient Monuments;*
- *Conservation Areas;*
- *Registered Historic Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest;*
- *Townscape character, and the local distinctiveness of settlements;*
- *Other historic, archaeological and cultural features of acknowledged importance”.*

Regard should therefore be given to the impact of the development on the character and appearance of the Listed Building.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Given that no alterations are proposed to the permitted scheme (P/09/0303), the key considerations in this application is whether there have been any changes in planning policy, since the original application was granted consent, and whether these changes would result in a different outcome in this application.

Since the approval of the P/09/0303 application there has been a change in the local planning policy with the adoption of the Local Development Plan on the 25th May 2011. However, the policies within the deposit LDP were taken into consideration in the determination in the previous application. Whilst there has been a change in local planning policy, the general thrust of the relevant policies in the deposit and adopted LDP's is to preserve or enhance the character and setting of listed building. In this respect, the planning merits of the proposed development remains acceptable.

It is considered that the former St John's Church building remains in need of urgent renovation and that bringing the building back into beneficial use would not only preserve and improve the appearance of the building, but would also enhance this part of the

Dowlais Conservation Area. Therefore the proposed works would meet the objectives of Policy BW6 of the LDP.

Planning policy supports sympathetic reuse of listed buildings wherever possible. Paragraph 6.5.8 of PPW (updated since the original permission was granted) states that the reinstatement of existing uses should generally be the first option when considering the future of listed buildings. However it is recognised that it may no longer be viable or appropriate for the original use to be re-established and in these cases other uses that can be compatible with the building's setting and character should be considered. In this instance, it is considered that the residential use of the former St John's Church remains an appropriate use of the building and is compatible with its character and setting.

CONCLUSIONS

For the above reasons, it is considered that the proposed works to the former St John's Church remains acceptable and complies with the relevant national and LDP policies. Accordingly, the following recommendation is made:

RECOMMENDATION: LISTED BUILDING CONSENT BE GRANTED subject to the following **CONDITIONS:**

1. **Before construction works commence** further details, layouts and finishes of the following internal areas shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and all works undertaken shall be completed in accordance with such approved details.
 - (i) The ground floor and first floor areas containing the John Josiah Guest memorial, original chancel steps, pulpit, memorial plaques and fire enclosed staircase (as indicated in Drawing Nos: 012/08/020, 012/08/023 and 012/08/041).
 - (ii) The ground, first, second, third and fourth floor areas containing the re-located Lady Chapel screen, nave pews and font (as indicated in Drawing Nos: 012/08/020, 012/08/023, 012/08/026, 012/08/029, 012/08/032 and 012/08/039).

Reason - In the interest of visual amenity and to secure the sympathetic preservation of internal features of the Listed Building in accordance with Policy BW6 and BW7 of the Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan.

2. All apertures and ventilation features shall be constructed in accordance with the submitted detail indicated in Drawing Nos: 012/08/047, 012/08/048, 012/08/049, 012/08/050, 012/08/051 and 002 Rev 7.

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

3. **Before construction works commence** details of all boundary enclosures shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. All works

undertaken shall be implemented in full in accordance with such details prior to the beneficial occupation of any of the residential units hereby approved.

Reason - To ensure that all new enclosures are of a design sympathetic to the original character of the principal listed building in accordance with Policies BW6 and BW7 of the Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan.

4. The developer shall ensure that a suitably qualified archaeologist is present during the undertaking of any ground disturbing works in the development area, so that an archaeological watching brief can be conducted. The archaeological watching brief shall be undertaken to the standards of the Institute of Field Archaeologists. The Local Planning Authority shall be informed, in writing, at least two weeks prior to the commencement of the development of the name of the said archaeologist and no work shall begin until the Local Planning Authority has confirmed, in writing, that the proposed archaeologist is suitable. A copy of the watching brief report shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority within two months of the fieldwork being completed by the archaeologist.

Reason - To identify and record any features of archaeological interest discovered during the works, in order to mitigate the impact of the works on the archaeological resource in accordance with the Policy BW6 of the Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan.

5. **Development shall not begin** until an appropriate photographic survey of the existing buildings on the site has been carried out in accordance with details to be submitted to, and approved by, the Local Planning Authority. The resulting photographs should be deposited with the following records:

- (i) The County Sites and Monuments Record, operated by the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust, Heathfield House, Heathfield, Swansea, SA1 6EL. Tel: 01792 655 208.
- (ii) The National Monuments Record of Wales, operated by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, Plas Crug, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, SY23 1NJ. Tel: 01970 621 211.

Reason - The building is one of architectural and cultural significance and records are required to mitigate the impact of development in accordance with Policy BW6 of the Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan.
