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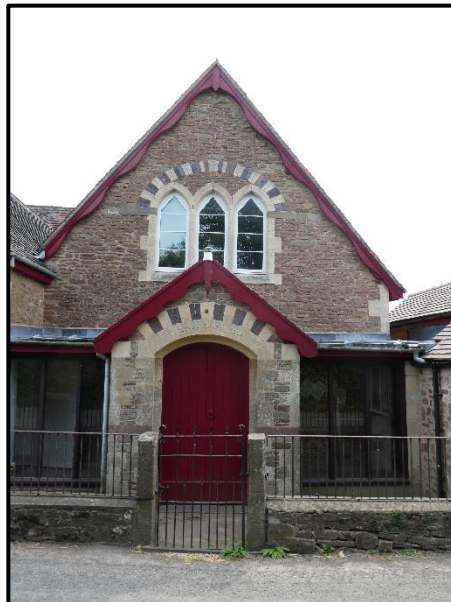
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**Former Methodist Church,
May Hill,
Gloucester
GL17 0NP**

Conversion to Dwelling

**Design and Access Statement
Revised**



Date: 10th January 2021
3003/D&AS

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Regulated by RICS
Company No: 09360236

This statement has been prepared as part of the supporting documentation for submission with the application for Planning Consent for conversion of the former Methodist Church to a dwelling.

The front of the building to the main road faces generally north-west.

DESIGN

1.0 Introduction and Description

- 1.1 The church was built in 1864 as a Wesleyan Methodist Church. This originally comprised the main church space and entrance porch, plus a rear hall opening off to the north. The archway over the porch door is inscribed with the date. The single- storey block to the south containing the existing kitchen and Lavatories appears to be late C19.
The Schoolroom in matching style occupying the north-east corner of the building is dated 1922 over the entrance door.
The glazed link along the front of the building was constructed around the Millennium.
- Due to falling attendance the Church closed for worship in June 2019. See attached Closure Statement at the rear of this report.
- 1.2 The building is situated in the centre of the scatted village. It faces the main road through from the A40 to Glasshouse. A narrow lane branches off around the north side, leading to the Anglican Church and Village Hall on Gander's Green, the lower village road.
- 1.3 The building is not Listed or in a Conservation Area. However, given the age, architectural features and previous use of the building, it would be regarded by the Local Authority as a non-designated heritage asset.
- 1.4 The buildings are generally of Forest of Dean rubble stone, with attractive detailing of Cotswold limestone and blue and buff brick. Walls are solid.
The roofs are of banded clay plain tiles and detailed timber barge boards. Rear walls to the Kitchen block are of solid brick. The modern front link is of glazed timber, with a lead roof.
Windows otherwise have been replaced in double- glazed uPVC.
There is a stone boundary wall to the front, facing the road with original metal gates. The railings surmounting the wall between the piers are modern steel.
- 1.5 Internally, the three main spaces have high plastered ceilings. The main church space rises into the roof space with a flat ceiling about halfway up. The other two rooms have flat ceilings at wallplate level, with large loft areas above.
- 1.6 Interior fittings relating to the use as a church have been removed. Surviving fitting are not of historic or architectural interest.

- 1.7 The building is in good general condition, other than minor issues common to similar structures.
- 1.8 Other than a narrow strip along the south side containing the septic tank and a walled area to the front there is no curtilage outside the footprint of the building.
- 1.9 There is very restricted on-site parking, and the adjoining landowner has declined to consider selling land to provide additional curtilage or to co-operate in any way. A large hedge in the neighbour's ownership prevents an adequate visibility splay to the south-west.
- 2.0 **Proposals**
- 2.1 Alternative uses for the building have been considered. Regrettably, business or community use is hindered by the very limited scope for vehicle parking. On-road parking is undesirable due to the busy and narrow roads adjoining serving local farms and businesses, as well as residential use.
The very similar Anglican Church and Village Hall are about 200m away, and have access to good car parking facilities.
There are roughly 20 people living within the immediate area of the church and approximate 200 living on May Hill itself. This is clearly insufficient to support multiple community facilities, particularly given the proximity of the larger settlements of Huntley (1.8 miles) and Longhope (2.8 miles), each with their own community facilities.
- 2.2 It is therefore proposed that conversion to residential use is sought. The property will not be developed by the Applicants, but will be sold on the basis of an approval for Change of Use. It is presumed that a revised application to cover detailed design will be submitted by any purchaser.
- 2.3 The house would have three bedrooms. Two of these would be in the roof spaces, and would require new window openings to give light. Headroom is locally restricted by roof slopes. The existing roof structure would be generally unaltered.
- 2.4 Given the attractive detailing of the existing building, it is wished to retain external fabric as much as possible, with roadside elevations generally maintained as existing. The banded pattern to the plain tile roof would be retained, and the obtrusive solar panels removed.
The wall and railings along the front of the site will be retained, although this reduces the area available for on-site parking.
Visible alterations are generally to areas at the rear and in areas concealed by restricted angles of view at ground level. The nature of the surrounding countryside restricts longer views of the building.
- 2.5 However, the need for car parking to the property requires the loss of the projecting front of the kitchen wing. This would allow parking for one car.

- 2.6 The truncated existing kitchen wing would be rebuilt with a new gable in matching style, to include a new entrance door and re-using the decorative bargeboard.
- 2.7 The small number of large, high rooms to the existing building are a challenge to repurpose for domestic use, and it is proposed to subdivide these as necessary to provide necessary service spaces, whilst attempting to retain the essential architectural character of the building.
- 2.8 The height of the existing main rooms allows for a first floor to be inserted in the roof spaces without significantly altering the primary structure. However, this will require the introduction of a number of additional openings to provide light and ventilation. These would be rooflights set flush with the roof tiles.
- 2.9 A new gable window matched to existing styles to be inserted in gable to the rear.
- 2.10 Between the front gables, where there is an inaccessible lead valley gutter, it is proposed to connect the roof spaces with a hipped link with flat roof. This will be tile faced to the road as the adjacent roof pitches, and would be invisible from ground level.
- 2.11 To allow access to the sunny rear terrace area, it is proposed to form an opening by lowering the cill of one of the lancet windows on the south side, with a timber door. A raised terrace area would be formed to give generally level access from the house. The remaining grassed area would be landscaped.

3.0 **Access**

- 3.1 The property is accessed by the adjacent village road. There are no pavements, being a scattered rural settlement. There is no bus service to the village.

The road is wide enough for vehicles to pass easily, and the former congregation parked on the road along from the Church. However, the road is well-used, and permanent on-road parking is undesirable. There is no public off-road parking in the vicinity of the building.

A single off-road parking space is possible by the reduction of the existing Kitchen wing. Visibility issues make parking to the side problematical.

- 3.2 The existing front doors have about 1200mm wide clear opening, which is easily negotiable with a wheelchair. An alternative front entrance door is proposed, 762mm wide, negotiable with a smaller wheelchair. Level access could be arranged.
- 3.3 In the proposals, a suitable WC and Bathroom are provided on ground floor level. The ground floor is on a single level. Access to most of the first floor is possible with a chair lift to the stairs.

COPY OF THE CLOSURE STATEMENT

CHURCH : May Hill Methodist Church

CIRCUIT: Gloucestershire

May Hill is a rural church within an ageing community and with very few young families living locally. Over the years it has lost something of its community commitment as residency has changed to some degree with new inhabitants moving in. Members have sought faithfully to worship and serve the community for over 150 years, and have continued in recent years to do their best to reach out to the local community, but with little response. Ultimately, the remaining members have realized that they could no longer maintain the commitments required to cover their continuing costs, or to continue to reach out to the local church area and local community. The members do not believe they have the collective strength to continue. There are 6 Members ranging from a 101year old to the youngest at 67.

There are roughly 20 people living within the immediate area of the church and approximate 200 living on May Hill itself.

In order to seek and try out new ideas, the members did a house to house survey around the neighbourhood to ask the community what they would like to see, which only had two responses, neither related to the church presence. The members started a monthly coffee morning for the community which is supported by a few regular neighbours. This has been of value in itself, but without resulting in the addition of any numbers to the worshipping community. For many years the members have also hosted walks and teas every six months, supported by some members of the wider community (and by other churches in the Circuit), but again neither these events, nor the quiet witness of well-regarded church members within the wider community, have increased the worshipping congregation.

Talks have been held with the Anglian church but they have only recently appointed a new vicar and have the same numbers of members, as the Methodist Church, with a similar age range. The Anglian church is also within a diocesan group of five churches.

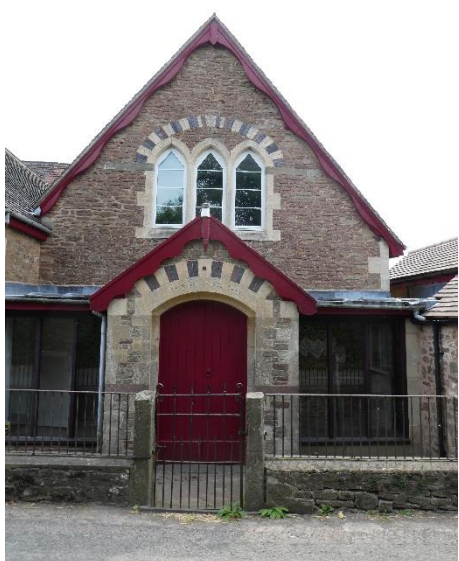
PHOTOGRAPHS



General view of front elevation.



From south.



Church and entrance porch.



1922 School Room.



From north.



Rear view.

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Side area, with existing parking.



Church area interior.



Rear Hall.



School Room.



Roof space.



Valley gutter.

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