

022-28 North Tamerton Methodist Chapel

North Tamerton Methodist Chapel, North Tamerton, Cornwall, EX22 6RZ

DESCRIPTION: Conversion of a Methodist Chapel to a Residential Dwelling



Introduction -

This Design & Access Statement has been prepared in support of an application to convert a vacant Methodist chapel into a residential dwelling in the countryside near North Tamerton parish, on the western outskirts of North Tamerton along Wilsworthy Cross Road. It's worth noting that the area falls under Band 1 for the Community Infrastructure Levy and is within the Upper Tamar region, designated as an Area of Great Landscape Value.

During site investigations, approximately 20 bats were discovered, including a Brown Long-eared bat maternity roost, as well as both Common and Soprano Pipistrelles. Provisions have been made in the loft space to accommodate this bat population, following recommendations from Woodfield Ecology. Additionally, plans include the installation of two Swift boxes and two Sparrow terraces.

Historical information reveals that the eastern end of the building was constructed in 1869, with an extension to the western end in 1932. There is also a lean-to extension on the western end, possibly added post-1932 to provide sanitary facilities for the church. The existing building features traditional construction with solid stone walls and a slate timber trussed roof. The stone walls have been rendered on the south and west elevation that matches the rendered blockwork lean to extension. The windows are PVCu, and the rainwater goods are made of metal.

The proposal involves transforming the building into a 3-bedroom dwelling, with ensuite bathrooms for each room. An additional story will be added to the eastern end of the structure. Given the size of the external spaces and their proximity to the road, the proposal aims to create an opening in the east gable elevation to establish a private courtyard area.

In planning terms, the site is in a Designated Rural Area (DRA). Cornwall Council's Local Plan includes a policy for developing new homes in the countryside by converting redundant buildings into residential properties.

“Reuse of suitably constructed redundant, disused or historic buildings that are considered appropriate to retain and would lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting.” [Policy 7c.]

Regarding surface water treatment, efforts were made to explore options, but percolation tests conducted in the strip of land opposite the chapel, which is within the ownership, yielded poor results. Since there is no change in the roofscape, the proposal intends to retain the existing surface water drainage system. However, it is proposed to handle foul waste in a cesspool, as the existing option will no longer be viable.

Context Appraisal

Environmental context

North Tamerton Methodist Chapel 320m west of Church of St Denis, is surrounded on three sides by agricultural land. There is a barbed wire fence on the North and West side and shrubbery & hedges on the eastern end. The proposal has no intention of affecting the surrounding hedgerow of trees.

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Fig 1: View of the Methodist Chapel from above (photo: author)

There is no mains drainage connection to the application site. There is an overhead powerline crossing the road that connects to the Methodist Chapel.

Built form and materials context



Fig 2: Image of the Methodist chapel (photo: author)

The existing methodist chapel walls are rendered on the southern and western elevation and stone on the north and east elevation. The roof is slate with metal rainwater goods that discharge onto the ground.

Use

The use will be a primary dwelling for the owners.

Amount

The existing dwelling has a footprint of 191m², This footprint will not change.

Layout

The proposed dwelling currently lacks ample private outdoor space. To address this, we plan to retract the external wall on the eastern side, creating a private external area. In consideration of preserving the central arch that divides the two parts built between 1869-1932, we've designed two staircases. This design also allows for a private entrance for guests.

Scale

The current dwelling has a Gross Internal Floor Area (GIFA) of 203.7m² (ground floor= 166.9m², first floor= 36.8m²). The proposed dwelling will have a GIFA of 195.9m² (ground floor= 126.9m², first floor= 68.8m²). The reduction in internal area is due to the addition of a new external courtyard of 22.2m² and the inclusion of new internal insulation for the external walls.

Landscape

The existing site has minimal soft landscaping, with small grassy areas in front of the property. These will be replaced with permeable hardstanding to allow occupants to move around the front of the property without accessing the highway. In the strip of impermeable land opposite the chapel an area of 154m² will be made into a fenced off garden with soft landscaping which will reduce the amount of surface runoff on the site.

Appearance

The current white UPVC windows will be replaced with PPC aluminium glazing units. Necessary repairs to the existing guttering will be made, and metal RWG's will be added to match. The new opening on the east elevation will feature a glazed area that matches the replacement units. A black metal railing will be installed at the edge of the opening to prevent access to the neighbour's land.

Access

Access to the property will remain the same as it currently exists. Residents will continue to cross the highway from the parking area to access the property.



Fig 3: Existing access to the site. (Photo: Google.)

Drainage

The current chapel utilises a septic tank that discharges into a nearby field, and surface water drains onto the ground. The septic tank has been disconnected, necessitating the need for an alternative system for foul. There is a piece of land across from the chapel under the same ownership which is the only feasible area to deal with foul and surface water. Your environment conducted BRE365 tests, which indicated poor percolation, making the installation of a soakaway or drainage field unfeasible. Since the connection to mains drainage is 100 metres away, it is also an impractical option for managing foul. Consequently, the proposed solution is to install a cesspool. Given the absence of mains drainage for surface water and the inability to use a soakaway, it is suggested that the existing surface water treatment method remains in place. This is considered a suitable solution, as it does not involve an increase in roof area compared to the existing setup.