

PRE-APPLICATION

THE LIGHT & LIFE CENTRE

HERITAGE IMPACT STATEMENT

1. Identification of heritage assets & their setting

The overall building was originally Pool Methodist church.

Planning approval & listed building approval were granted to the Light & Life Church ref PA13/07121 & PA13/07122 both dated 28/1/14 for:-

“Internal re-ordering – removal of pews to ground floor, new door to 1st floor, new toilets, alterations to side entrance & repair of external fabric”

These works were carried out so the Church ceased to be a Methodist Church.

There are also a further number of planning & listed building approvals:-

- Planning approval & listed building ref PA21/12677 & PA21/12678 both dated 20/7/22

“Change of use of Sunday School/hall & associated works to form 2 dwellings”

“Listed building consent: works associated with the change of use of Sunday School/hall to form 2 dwellings”

- Listed building consent for works associated with the change of use of Sunday School/hall to form 2 dwellings (amended design to amend internal layout & incorporate replacement & new windows)”

- Planning approval & listed building consent ref PA22/10203 & PA22/10204 both dated 15/3/23

“Works associated with the change of use of Sunday School/hall to form 2 dwellings”

This current proposal is a continuation of that already approved & constructed, which was the change of use of the attached Sunday School/hall into residential use.

If one looks at the details of the listing it can be seen that the predominance of the listing is for the retention of the exterior façade.

This proposal as detailed on the attached drawings does not envisage any changes to the exterior elevations.

However the interior consists of a number of items which cannot be retained, but though listed are not necessarily original, high quality or remarkable.

The change of use of the Sunday School has already been carried out so the attached Sunday School does not exist any longer. It is now 2 dwellings.

Thus it can be seen that the Light & Life Centre usage was ceased along with the previous Methodist Church usage.

The overall building was listed as Pool Methodist Church 12/9/89 which was prior to the approvals ref PA13/07121 & PA13/07122 which allowed the internal ordering & other works.

The listing is;-

CARN BREA FORE STREET SW 64 SW (south side) 5/146 Pool Methodist Church

Wesleyan Methodist Chapel. Dated 1862 in gable; enlarged 1865; altered. Snecked killas with granite quoins & dressings, sides & rear of uncoursed rubble, modern pantiled roof. Rectangular plan on north-south axis, 3x6 bays (originally 3x3), gable to road. Two storeys; the symmetrical 3-bay facade has a wide basket-arched doorway in the centre, with panelled doors and an overlight, a round-headed window above the door, and tall round-headed windows on each side (their heads at the same level), all these openings with long-and-short voussoirs and raised keystones; the gable contains a moulded roundel with the date "1862", and marks round the margin of its triangle suggest that the dressings of a former simple pediment have been removed. Ridge ventilator on roof. The side walls have a quoined vertical joint to the rear of the 3rd bay, and 16-pane sashed windows on both floors, and the east side has tall doorways in the 5th and 6th bays. Interior: horseshoe gallery on iron Tuscan columns with coupled brackets supporting a jettied front which is panelled; basket-arched apse to choir gallery (containing organ) with classical-style architrave including pilasters with impostes, moulded cornice, and small pediment with acanthus decoration; rostrum supported by low Tuscan colonnade, deck protected by Gothic-style trefoil arcading and approached by elegant curved staircases rising from the rear.



North elevation



East elevation as viewed from Wilson Way



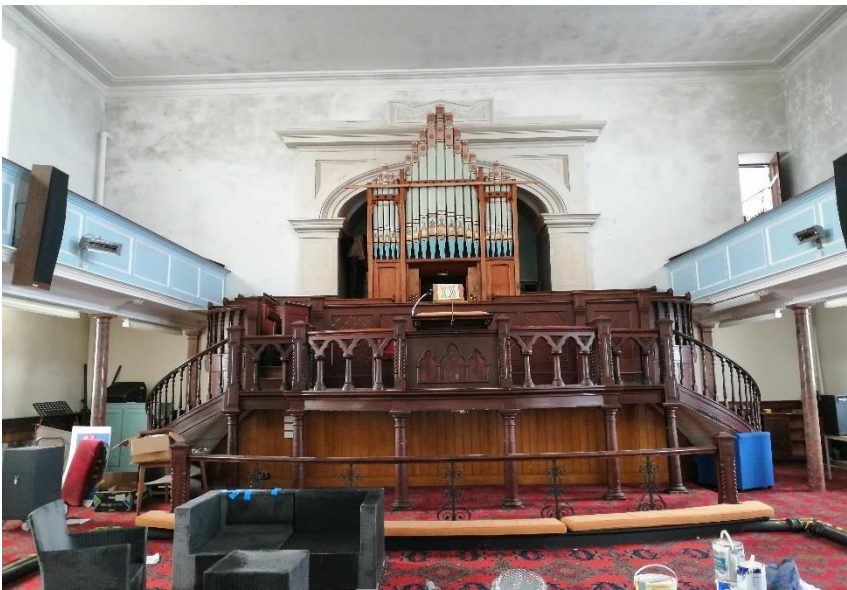
South elevation.
Showing the single storey modern kitchen extension



West elevation



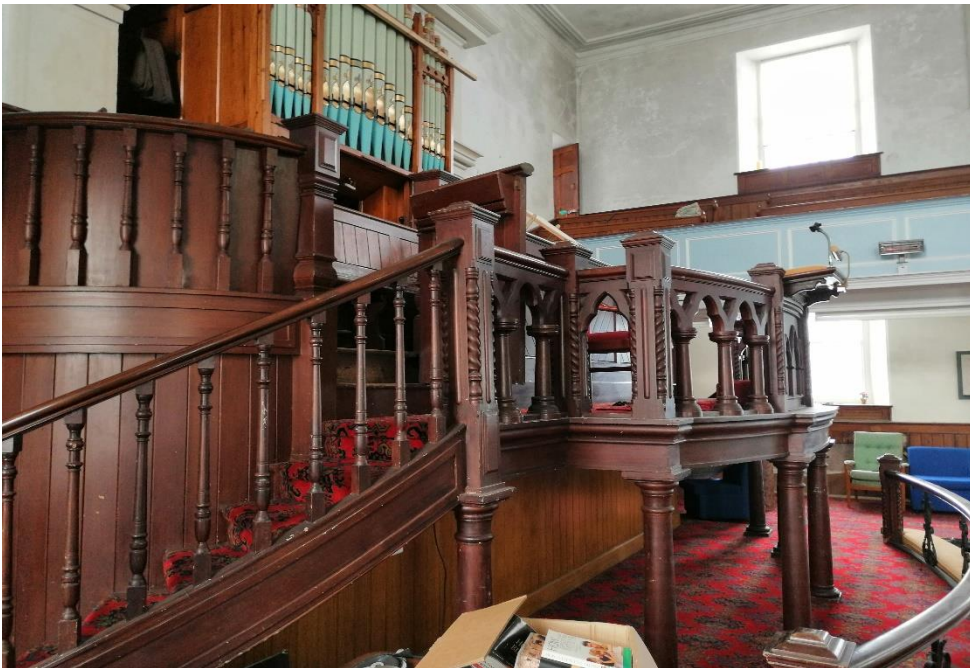
Showing ceiling rose



Looking South showing organ part set in recess, pulpit & choir stall.



Looking North showing entrance screen with gallery over.



Showing pulpit & choir stall.



Showing gallery seating & stained glass to North elevation



Showing main entrance door & overlight to North elevation



Showing main entrance gate



Showing stained glass

It has to be accepted that the building cannot continue in its present state which is redundancy. It is not possible to use for religious purposes as the Sunday School/hall has already been converted for residential use, & the pews at ground floor taken away as part of the approval to convert from a Methodist Chapel to the Light & Life Centre, & now the Light & Life Centre has closed for a number of years.

The building fabric is now suffering from no usage & urgently needs a new use to allow the building to be resurrected with a future life as part of the community.

As much as we would like to see the religious use continue as part of the community hub, this is just not viable.

We all know there is a drastic shortage of affordable housing & this application helps by the proposal of 4 self contained residencies within the fabric of the building, thus the massing & viewed from the public domain remains as is.

However to allow this proposal which would ensure the future legacy of this building it is not possible to keep the majority of the internal features, being the pulpit & choir stall, organ, gallery seating & the lobby screen.

Of course the Chapel body being the building fabric would be retained.

It is hoped however that as a condition of any subsequent approval that each of the above items (including the memorials) be carefully taken down under the supervision of the County Council archive department, & either carefully stored for a future use, or handed over to the County Council archive department as a gift, again for future use.

However all the items which affect the external view, the front door & overlight, the windows, the roof, the stonework, the entrance gates & the ridge ventilator will be retained & incorporated into this scheme.

2. Assessment of the significance of the heritage assets & their setting

There are really 2 separate entities to be considered, the exterior & the interior.

The exterior will not be changed, thus the overall image of the building (which includes the Sunday school/hall change of use to residential) remains the same. When viewed from the main road Fore Street from the West & from the East, & also from Wilson Way, the building massing & the detail remain the same.

The proposal to convert into 4 self-contained residential units within the existing building fabric ensures the building assets & their setting are retained.

The interior is a different matter because it is not possible to allow any change of use & still retain the pulpit & choir stall, organ, gallery seating & lobby screen.

But by the removal of (& safe storage for future use) it is possible to allow an economically viable scheme which would ensure the buildings future.

If however it is decided that the interior has to remain as is then I can only see the steady deterioration & subsequent ruination as there is no possible future use within the interior as is.

3. Assessment of impacts & harm

As stated in 2 above there are 2 separate entities to be considered, the exterior & the interior.

The exterior proposed change of use does not impact on the building fabric.

The roof stays the same.

The stone walls stay the same.

The replacement windows will be like for like.

The front door stays the same.

There is only minor proposed external works.

Thus the conclusion is that the impact is minimal & that there is no harm.

The interior proposal is different. The current building usage is for religion, originally as a Methodist Church, then subsequently as a Light & Life Centre, & the removal of the pews.

But the space is still a double storey single space & there is no possible way that this space can continue as a single space for religious purposes.

So the only solution for the building to be resurrected & have a future is by a change of use.

We are of the opinion that the only economically viable change of use is to residential.

There is a dire shortage of affordable dwellings & this proposal for 4 no 1 bedroom self contained residential units will go a long way towards helping the housing shortage.

But this proposal will necessitate the removal of the internal features. Though in mitigation they can be carefully taken down & stored for future use, or gifted to the Cornwall Council archive department.

The query whether a more "sensitive" scheme could be considered & thus the retention of the internal features be considered was asked & the answer is no. The only proposed change of use is going to be for small units & the building at the moment is one big 2 storey space.

Even if one considered pods or office rooms, the interior features could not be retained, & also there would be a parking problem.

This change of use to 1 bedroom self contained units is the best option, as it is an in-town site, on the bus route, has planning & community considerations, & of course will ensure the retention & future viability of this landmark building.

4. Mitigation strategy

When considering the exterior of this building & how it is affected by this proposed change of use, there is no mitigation required as the building fabric is not changed.

Internally as discussed above it is a different matter.

One either has to accept that there is no change of use, thus the building remains empty, does not have a use or a future & eventually will deteriorate.

Or one can accept that the future of this rather prominent & well known building is more important.

That the building can continue to be part of the townscape & the community & thus play a role in the changing face of Camborne, but it will have to be accepted that the internal features cannot remain, & what is the point of them remaining as already they are redundant as the Church does not function as a Church?

The only mitigation can be the proposal to carefully take down the interior features & store them for a possible future use in another environment, or gift them to the Cornwall Council archives department.

5. Recent planning precedents

The Cornwall Council planning website has been searched for alterations to listed chapels in the last 10 years. There are many, however the following precedents were found that relate to important buildings with listed status.

Conversion of Fraddon Methodist Chapel to 2 dwellings

Application number C2/10/00923, approved October 2010. Building is Listed Grade 2. Scheme involves the removal of the organ, rostrum, pews & communion rail. Mezzanine floor inserted over part of chapel with enclosure of rooms beneath.

Conversion of Manhay Methodist Chapel to single dwelling

Application number PA96/H0066, approved June 1996. Building is listed Grade 2. Removal of all internal fittings, except gallery, insertion of first floor, & conversion by subdivision of chapel space.

Conversion of Methodist Chapel at Plain-an-Gwarry, Redruth into twelve apartments, & the addition of an extension.

Building is listed grade 2. Application number W2/PA06/01974/LBC, approved March 2007. No drawings available but likely to have included removal of internal fittings to achieve such a dense conversion.

Conversion of Porkellis Methodist Chapel to single dwelling

Application number PA12/03582, approved June 2012. Building is listed grade 2*. Scheme includes the removal of most of the box pews & the organ, the insertion of bedrooms into the gallery, & the sub division of part of the ground floor.

Conversion of Trelowth Methodist Chapel, Trelowth, St Austell to single dwelling

Building is listed Grade 2. Application number PA12/07131 & PA12/07132, approved October 2012. Scheme involves the removal of all fittings except part of the rostrum, the insertion of a gallery & the sub division of part of the ground floor.

Conversion of Tuckingmill Methodist Chapel to fourteen flats.

Application number PA10/03358 approved December 2010. Building is listed Grade 2. Scheme involves removal of all fittings & furniture, flooring over gallery & sub division horizontally & vertically.