



Penderfyniad ar yr Apêl

Ymweliad â safle a wnaed ar 19/10/21

gan J Burston BSc MA MRTPI AIPROW

**Arolygydd a benodir gan Weinidogion
Cymru**

Dyddiad: 17/01/2022

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19/10/21

by J Burston BSc MA MRTPI AIPROW

**an Inspector appointed by the Welsh
Ministers**

Date: 17/01/2022

Appeal Ref: APP/A6835/A/21/3280592

**Site address: Golftyn Presbyterian Church, Church Street, Connaught Quay, Deeside,
Flintshire CH5 4AA**

The Welsh Ministers have transferred the authority to decide this appeal to me as the appointed Inspector.

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by M.A.D.E Developments against the decision of Flintshire County Council.
 - The development proposed is the conversion of redundant chapel and Sunday school into 6no. flats with car parking, cycle storage and drying area.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. In reaching my decision, I have taken into account the requirements of sections 3 and 5 of the Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. I consider that this decision is in accordance with the Act's sustainable development principle through its contribution towards the Welsh Ministers' well-being objectives of making our cities, towns and villages even better places in which to live and work.

Main Issues

3. The main issue in this appeal is the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding locality.

Reasons

4. The appeal building is a former Presbyterian Church and is situated in the urban area of Connaught Quay which has a mixed character. The church buildings, together with some of the commercial buildings that served the surrounding area, are significant in terms of the social history of the area and the understanding of its development. In particular, the scale and location of the

church, close to the highway, dominates and makes a significant contribution to the streetscene hereabouts.

5. Above all, the principal elevation provides an imposing street frontage, with its large stained glass windows, raised surround to the large double doors and feature brickwork make it immediately recognisable as an ecclesiastical building. Indeed it is evident that this was the principal entrance to the church when it functioned as a place of worship.
6. The building is not statutorily or locally listed or in a conservation area, but even so, alterations or extensions to it should respect its character and be sympathetic to its appearance. In this respect Planning Policy Wales, Edition 11 (PPW) states at paragraph 3.9 that *"The special characteristics of an area should be central to the design of a development. The layout, form, scale and visual appearance of a proposed development and its relationship to its surroundings are important planning considerations."*
7. Moreover, Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment (TAN 24) sets out at paragraph 1.14 that *".....Every place has its own history, which has shaped its character and leaves tangible traces in its present form and fabric. This historic character makes each place unique and gives it a distinctive identity. Historic character should be taken into account in the management of change in order to sustain local distinctiveness and a sense of place....."*
8. The proposal to remove the front façade, which was the main entrance to the original place of worship, and a large section of the building fronting Church Street to provide 3 parking spaces at the front of the premises, would result in the loss of what was originally the most important part of the building complex. The appeal proposal would not lead to a total loss of the buildings presence in the streetscene, as parts of the building would be retained, and a new façade established. Nonetheless, the loss of the principal component of the complex would lead to its placemaking role being diminished and would significantly undermine the historic character and identity of the locality.
9. The desire to adapt the dwelling to modern requirements so that it can have a long-term future is understood but there is nothing to indicate that this can only be achieved in the manner proposed. Moreover, although the façade of the appeal building facing Church Street is in a state of disrepair, there is no evidence that would indicate that this is not capable of repair which would improve its present appearance. In this respect, I find that the aesthetic value has been understated by the appellant.
10. I have had due regard to the example cited by the appellant, said to be similar to the development proposed here. Nevertheless, I have little knowledge as to the Council's reasons for granting planning permission in that particular instance and my remit is to weigh up the merits, and/or impacts of the development currently at issue. Having carefully weighed matters up, though, the presence of the development referred to does not outweigh the harm that I have identified, due largely to its particular location.
11. The appellant identifies a range of benefits that would arise from the appeal scheme. These include the re-use of a community building and the provision of housing. New homes would deliver social and economic benefits, both during

construction of the scheme, and from the potential increase of spending in local shops and services arising from its occupants thereafter. I readily accept that the site is previously developed land, and that its redevelopment would meet the PPW objective of directing development to such sites. Taken together, these benefits attract moderate weight.

12. Nonetheless, having considered the matters presented in support of the development, they do not outweigh the significant harm that is caused to the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding locality. As such, the proposal is contrary to Policies GEN1, D1 and D2 of the Flintshire Unitary Development Plan, which seek, amongst other matters, that developments should harmonise with the site and surroundings in terms of the siting, scale, design, layout, use of space, materials, external appearance and landscaping so that the character and amenity of the locality is protected and proposals add to the quality and distinctiveness of the local area.

Conclusion

13. The proposal would conflict with the development plan as a whole and there are no other considerations which outweigh this. Therefore, for the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J Burston

INSPECTOR