



Design Review Report

Capel Carmel, Llanfynydd

DCFW Ref: 200

Meeting of 13th June 2019



Review Status

CONFIDENTIAL

Meeting date	13 th June 2019
Issue date	25 th June 2019
Scheme location	Llanfynnydd, Carmarthenshire
Scheme description	Residential – Conversion
Scheme reference number	200
Planning status	Pre-application

Declarations of Interest

The architect for this project, Phil Roberts is also a member of the DCFW Design Review Panel.

Consultations to Date

Informal consultation as part of the process with the Local Planning Authority.

The Proposals

Carmel Chapel is a former chapel built in 1850, enlarged in 1875 and rebuilt in 1908. It was last used for agricultural storage. The building is situated deep in the countryside above the Towy Valley and affords distant views of the Black Mountains and Carmarthen. Externally, the chapel has a natural slate roof and rendered elevations with some missing patches where there is evidence of an earlier whitewash finish.

The roadside (East) elevation has three round headed windows and an external staircase, the Southern gable elevation is blank with a chimney rising over the ridge, and the ground rises from the road around the side and rear (North) elevations. The building retains the outward appearance and characteristics of a small rural chapel but with newer crudely formed openings on the North gable and adjacent the external steps.

It is proposed to convert the former chapel to residential use by housing the main living space in the retained chapel and, via a glazed upper level link, provide two bedrooms and a bathroom in a subservient parallel extension to the West side.

The Local Authority's *Adaptation and Re-use of Rural Buildings for Residential Use* policy requires any such conversion to be designed without 'extensive' extension. However, the LPA briefing note suggests that the proposed parallel extension could be considered acceptable under certain circumstances.

Summary

The panel queried the status of an adjacent mature tree to the West and were told this had been felled by the farmer. Another adjacent tree to the South West, also prominent on longer views, would not be affected by the proposals.

The Design Commission accepted that a previously consented proposal to convert the chapel was unrealisable because of the height restrictions of the original. They were supportive of the principle of bringing the chapel building into sustainable re-use through a sensitive and energy-efficient restoration. They accepted that to provide sleeping accommodation an extension would be required. The Commission considered options illustrated for an extension to the West, and were of the view that a block echoing the simple double pitched roof - but single storey - and more modest in appearance and length would be appropriate, if it enabled the integrity of the original building to be respected as was indicated.

The Design Commission were also supportive of the proposal to use sympathetic materials, but contrasting style on the extension, and with subservient proportions, as they considered that this approach would be complementary to the original. The proposed glazed link between the buildings and the void under, revealing the original retaining wall, created a light transparent connection between buildings keeping consistency without interfering with the building narratives. The Commission were reassured that the sustainability aspirations outlined by the Architect had the potential to be exemplary, involving internal wall insulation and external wall treatment. A thorough analysis of the condition of the external walls is required in order to determine an appropriate weathering finish that may provide a solution of a similar appearance to the original.

Based on the discussion, the following are the areas which would benefit from further consideration:

Consideration of a more sensitive balance between the benefit from south-facing glazing that would provide passive solar gain into the chapel building, and a fenestration pattern that would respect the quality of the original, possibly taking inspiration from the round-headed East windows. A clear narrative and rationale for the approach taken should inform and justify the fenestration pattern that is taken forward.

The panel observed that a principle window to the South should be symmetrical on the gable, and ideally visible from the main living area through alignment of internal openings. They did not consider a balcony appropriate here, although this could be acceptable on the new extension provided it could be shown to integrate into the landscaping site plan. The chimney is an important feature and should be retained/restored. If a new flue was required (e.g from a wood burning appliance) this should be indicated and sensitively located.

The proposals should take into account the building curtilage design and the relationship with the external spaces.

Various options were presented for the glazing proportions and materiality of the new extension, and the panel believed the design should prioritise contemporary simplicity and natural materials, without resorting to an all-glass solution.

If the team considered there to be further benefit in doing so the Commission would be happy to be consulted again in due course.

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A Welsh language copy of this report is available upon request.

Attendees

Agent/Client/Developer:

Architect: Phil Roberts

Local Authority: Graham Noakes, Carmarthenshire County Council

Design Review Panel:

Chair: Jen Heal

Lead Panellist: Lynne Sullivan

Panel: Toby Adam, Simon Power, Larissa Berquó