



DESIGN  
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# Design Review Report

Brecon Lodge, Ffrwdgrech

**DCFW Ref: 296**

Meeting of 18<sup>th</sup> May 2023



**Review Status**

Meeting date  
Issue date  
Scheme description  
  
Scheme location  
Scheme reference number  
Planning status

**Public**

19<sup>th</sup> May 2023  
31<sup>st</sup> May 2023  
Renovation and extension of a listed building  
Brecon Lodge, Ffrwdgrech  
N296  
Refused planning permission

## Key Points

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- The Design Commission is supportive of the principle of bringing a neglected building back into use and for the extension to be a contemporary design.
- The lodge is a listed building, and any extension must be sensitive to its history and character. The client may need to adjust their expectations of what is possible when adapting and extending this listed building.
- The Design Team should distil and reassess the analysis and design process that has informed the proposal and communicate it more effectively.
- The Design Team should explore how the design can better respond to the characteristics of the lodge and surrounding landscape to ensure that it is not overly dominant.
- The Design Team should further consider the relationship between the proposal and the watercourse. This is an important feature of the site and further analysis should be undertaken to ensure the proposals respond appropriately to it in terms of form and proximity.
- The Design Team should explore whether the thick fascia of the roof is appropriate to the characteristics of the listed building.

## Consultations to Date

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This Design Review meeting is the first engagement with the Design Commission. The scheme was registered for Design Review when a planning application and listed building consent were live. Ahead of the meeting, planning permission and listed building consent were refused by the local planning authority.

Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority did not attend the meeting or provide any supporting information. However, the applicant stated in the meeting that they had previously undertaken a pre-application with the local planning authority and that this was

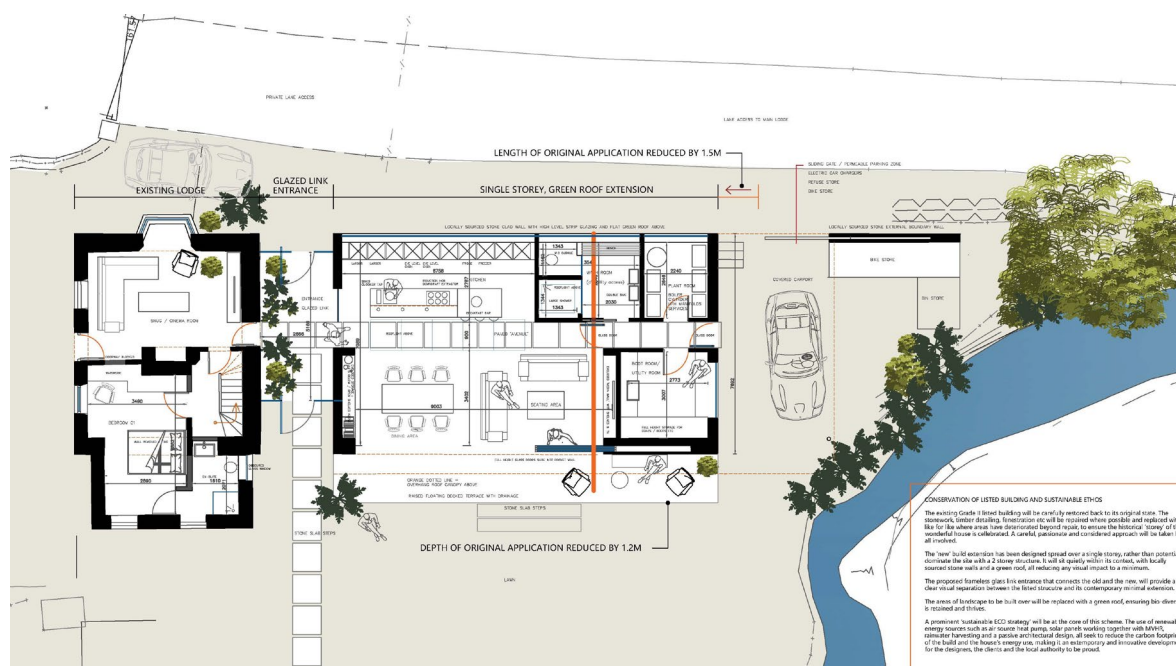
informally supportive of a two-storey extension. The client also explained how they had engaged with their neighbours who they advised were supportive of the proposal.

## The Proposal

The proposal is for the renovation of a Grade II Listed building and construction of a single storey rear extension. An existing, much smaller, extension would be demolished.

The proposed extension is of contemporary design, with a flat green roof and a frameless glass link connected to the original building. The north east elevation, facing the track to the the main house (Ffrwydgrech House), has been designed to resemble a garden wall, with locally sourced stone cladding, and has high level strip glazing and a thick fascia. The south west elevation has large sliding doors facing on to the garden. The roof of the proposed extension projects over a car port and connects with a stone wall screening bike and bin storage.

The proposal would turn what is a small lodge into a three bedroom home. The majority of the living space would be in the extension, with a large open plan kitchen, dining area and seating area, as well as a boot room/utility room, wash room, and plant room. The original lodge would accommodate the bedrooms, a new bathroom, and a snug/cinema room.



## Context

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The site is located within Bannau Brycheiniog National Park and just under 2 miles southwest of Brecon.

The site is located within Ffrwdgrech Historic Park and Garden and contains a building that was the lodge to Ffrwdgrech House. The lodge, main house and surrounding grounds are all Grade II Listed.

The building is vacant and has been sold by the owner of the main house to the client. The applicant is seeking to renovate and extend the building to create a larger family home.

There is an unnamed watercourse running around the southern and western boundaries of the lodge's garden. The watercourse joins the Nant Gwdi, which is a tributary of the Afon Tarrell.

## Main Points

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There are many good aspects to the proposal and we are in principle supportive of the clients' aspirations to bring a neglected building back into use. We agree that a single-story extension is more appropriate than a two storey extension. The overall contemporary design, with the flat green roof and glass link, complement the traditional lodge. The concept of creating a garden wall with a building beyond works well, and the use of locally sourced stone is very much supported.

There are, however, aspects of the proposal that are not well explained and which currently don't sit comfortably in relation to the lodge and watercourse. Below is a summary of the key points that were discussed to help improve the design of the scheme.

### **Listed Building**

It is important to recognise that the lodge's listed building status comes with the responsibility of being the custodian of the building and the requirement to preserve its history and character. The expectation of the client needs to be in the context of the lodge being a listed building and it may be that all their requirements cannot be met.

Plans to refurbish and extend a listed building within an exceptional landscape context require a greater level of detail and refinement to demonstrate that the stated design

quality can be achieved. From the discussion, it was communicated that the Design Team are committed to design quality but this needs to be further demonstrated in the material.

### **Design Process**

The information presented does not fully explain the analysis and design process that has informed the proposal. The analysis should zoom out and look at the wider context of the surrounding landscape, as well as focus in greater detail on the characteristics of the listed building.

The Design Team should distil the analysis and design process to explain why the proposal is like it is. Telling the story will help communicate the work undertaken to better understand the site and context and justify the design, as well as help inform further changes and the refinement of the scheme.

### **Scale**

The scale of the extension must relate to the lodge and the landscape. We encourage the Design Team to reconsider how the proposal can better respond to the characteristics of the lodge, garden and surrounding landscape. The Design Team should explore whether the design can reduce the dominance of the extension on the lodge and garden, and whether the accommodation could be broken-up to help achieve this.

### **Watercourse**

The proposed car port appears uncomfortably close to the watercourse and adds to the feeling of the extension being too large. The watercourse is an important feature of the site and greater attention and detail in the plans are needed to explain the relationship with the proposal.

### **Roof**

The roof of the proposed extension has a thick fascia that appears quite heavy and adds to the feeling of the extension being dominant. We encourage the Design Team to analyse the characteristics of the existing building to better understand whether the roof is sensitive to the listed building or if changes are required.

## Next Steps

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Design Review is primarily aimed at informing the design of schemes early in the design process. It is, therefore, unusual that this scheme has been through the planning process and refused planning permission before coming for Design Review. The applicant has the choice to appeal or make changes and resubmit the planning application. This is a matter for the client to decide, with the advice of their planning consultant, and is not something we can advise on.

The information in this report is aimed at helping improve the design and how it is communicated. Should the client wish to have further input from the Design Commission, please contact us and we will advise on the best way to do so.

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

## Attendees

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Client:	Rachel Bedgood Chris Jones
Design Team:	Glen Thomas Richard Wood
Planning Consultant:	Thomas Gronow
Local Planning Authority:	There was no representative from Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority.

### **DCFW Design Review Panel**

Chair:	Jamie Brewster
Panel:	Angela Williams Jen Heal, Deputy Chief Executive, DCFW Max Hampton, Design Advisor, DCFW

## Declarations of Interest

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Panel members, observers and other relevant parties are required to declare ***in advance*** any interests they may have in relation to the Design Review and meeting Agenda items. Any such declarations are recorded here and in DCFW's central records.

Jamie Brewster declared an interest as he knows and has worked with Thomas Gronow the Planning Consultant for the project. The interested was noted and everyone in the meeting was happy to continue.