

## **CONSERVATION CONSULTATION RESPONSE**

**Case Officer: Jacob Cooke**

**Application No: 24/0044 24/0045**

**Listed Building: Grade II**

**Address: St Paul's Commercial Street Newport**

**Proposal: LISTED BUILDING CONSENT FOR CONVERSION OF CHURCH INTO 9NO. FLATS**

### **1.0 BACKGROUND**

St Paul's Church is a grade II listed building dating back to 1835. The building was constructed by local architect T H Wyatt and further refurbished by G Clarke of Newport in 1859. The building is of Early English style, rock-faced stone with ashlar dressings, slate roofing, central octagonal tower with spire, stepped buttresses to pinnacles and lancets to bell stage of tower. The porches were added in 1888 by Habershon and Fawckner. The lower tower sees an open porch with tall Gothic arches, a vaulted ceiling with ribs and floral bosses. The side elevations have 9 bays with the ends having gables. The west or rear elevation has 5 bays with central polygon apse. Internally, the ceiling was added in 1842 by Wyatt. It is an undivided interior with a timber gallery to the western end and the chancel at the eastern end. The seating and organ have been removed, and the gallery has since been filled in with a partition (timber still visible).

### **2.0 CONSIDERATIONS**

The application proposes conversion of the church into 9 flats. 8 of the 9 would be located within the main body of the church and be of two floors. The 9<sup>th</sup> would be located above the ceiling in the roof space. Whilst conversion of the building is supported in principle, as I would ensure the reuse of an asset that has been left vacant for several years, the application does not provide enough detail for the Local Planning Authority to make a well informed assessment of the proposals. I will start by addressing the Heritage Impact Assessment. It is clear that the historic development of the building has been well researched and the significance of the site is clearly stated. However, I would not consider the level of details to be enough nor does it reach the level of assessment as required by Cadw. There is very little assessment of how the proposals will specifically affect fabric and internal plan form of this historic building, and I would expect more on this given the proposals will have a significant impact on these elements in particular.

Regarding the application, there are a number of plans that would be required and expected for a development as sensitive as this. It may be possible to condition some elements, but having the majority of details prior to a decision would be favourable. Plans required are:

#### ***Internal***

- Detailed internal cross sections of the proposed structure, demonstrating the free standing structure that would be installed as well as how internal features would appear/be preserved.
- The metal/steel framing for the apartments, how will this be secured/tied into the building? How would it compromise internal character, especially the timber ceiling and gallery detail? We want to keep as much as possible visible to preserve internal character, but it currently isn't clear from the plans what would be retained
- Additional support for unit within the roof space. How will the existing ceiling be reinforced? While a structural engineer report relates to monitoring of the roof beam dating back to 2015. The application should include details of how the roof accommodation can be provided and what impact this would have on the historic roof and ceiling structure.
- What linings and insulation would be used, and again how would these elements impact internal character and how would they respect the solid construction of the building (i.e. allow the breathability of the structure). Both in the roof space and within each flat.
- Further to the above, what ventilation is required and how will this impact fabric and external character?
- What drainage will be required and will this impact any original flagstones? Will these be retained as a historic feature?

### **External**

- There is a need for greater justification and details of the replacement windows. Whilst they are not as intricately designed as the stained glass at the apse, it still holds historic and architectural value. The HIA has not assessed this appropriately. The plans also do not detail the windows that would replace these sufficiently.
- Additionally, how will the new entrance doors appear?
- Boundary and landscaping details need to be provided
- As per comments from Historic Buildings and Places, the rooflights need to follow the rhythm and form of the original openings below. They shouldn't be too large.
- What external works are required? Method statements of repair and refurbishment should be detailed.
- It may also be useful to have a conservation and maintenance plan.

### **3.0 CONCLUSION**

To conclude, significantly more information is required at this stage to be able to make an informed decision on the application. I would not consider that the full impact of these proposals on fabric and plan form to have been appropriately justified and outlined.

Date: 21/03/2024

Signed: Laura Smith