

Design, Access and Heritage Supporting Statement

Proposed Conversion of Dilapidated Chapel at Wombwell into a Community Centre

At

Wombwell Cemetery, Summer Lane, Wombwell

For

Berneslai Homes Ltd



Wombwell Cemetery Chapel Approached from Cemetery Road

Wombwell Chapel – Proposed Internal Renovation

Design & Access Supporting Statement

Introduction

This statement supports the planning application for the proposed conversion of the dilapidated chapel at Wombwell Cemetery to a community centre.

This statement sets the context and explains the proposed scheme providing justification for the approach adopted. It is accompanied by photographs, maps and plans in order to illustrate and demonstrate an understanding of the client's needs and that of the public whilst adhering to the sensitive nature of the conservation area.

The statement includes site analysis, commentary on the use and quantity of development, an explanation of layout and scale, landscaping, details of illustrative external appearance, along with an explanation of the sustainability of the proposal, and the required description of access arrangements and the improvements set out in the proposed design.

This supporting statement is in accordance with Government Circular 01/06 'Guidance on Changes to the Development Control System'. It reflects the following stages as set out in CABE's document 'Design and Access Statements – How to Write, Read and Use Them'.

The Mortuary chapel at Wombwell, now in use as a store, was constructed c1868 by Thomas Dobb of Rotherham. The construction is generally thinly-coursed sandstone with some contrasting dressings and Welsh slate roof. The layout consists of a single-cell with corner spire and its appearance is of High Victorian style: polychromatic relieving arches, carved and contrasting bands. To the base of the external walls there is a battered plinth with chamfered band. The only access into the building is from a pointed doorway with colonnettes (all restored) at the gable end. Above the main access is a circular window with foiled openings in sunken ashlar panel. The gable also features ashlar gable copings with stepped kneelers. The single square based spire is located to right of the entrance with matching stone buttressed base to octagonal turret and slit windows. The spire has a cusped blind opening to each side beneath the grotesques. To the rear is a 4-light window beneath the pierced circular panel. To each eaves sides are two 2-light windows flanked by single lights. Above these is a pierced circular window set into a small feature eaves gablet (on the south elevation this has been replaced with a clock face). The Welsh slate features two bands of decorative cut-slate.



Aerial Image of Site

Site Appraisal

Context

The building is located off Summer Lane Wombwell and is a grade II listed. The building is considered to be of special interest to the overall conservation area. Therefore any work to the external elevations and materials will be avoided to maintain the character of the site.

The site falls gently towards Cemetery Road where the vehicular site entrance is located. The building is one of two “sister” chapels on the site and is in a dilapidated condition (its sister chapel is in a greater state of disrepair); the surrounding area (off site) is predominantly stone terrace housing with slate roof although there are some brick terrace properties to Blythe Street to the North East.

Vehicular access is located off Cemetery Road to the South East of the site although there is a demountable bollard to this entrance. There are several pedestrian access points to each adjoining road except Blythe Street (namely Cemetery Road, Main Street and Summer Lane). To all sides of the site (except Blythe Street) the boundary is marked with a natural stone wall with stone pillars and infill metal fence between. Blythe Street boundary backs onto residential gardens.



North & South Chapel in Context with Graves in Foreground

Use

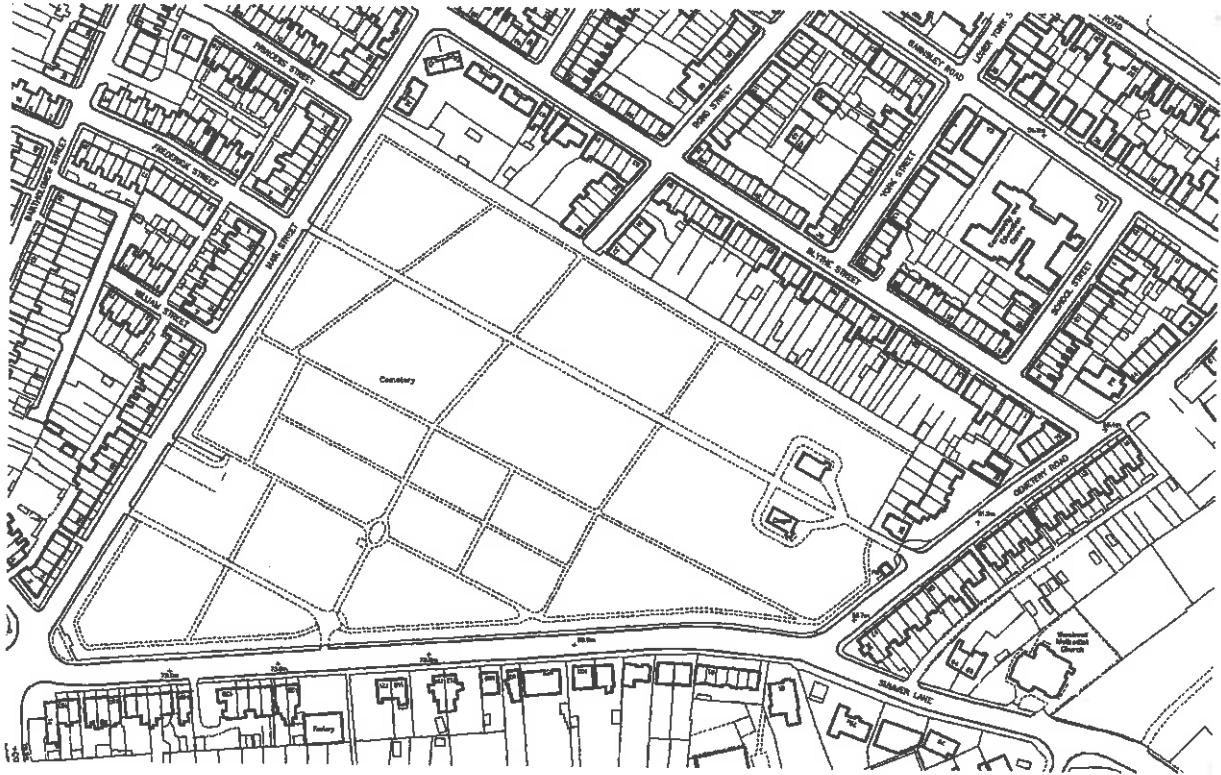
The building is currently unoccupied, the previous use being one of two “sister” Chapels of rest. The building has fallen into chronic disrepair with vandalised windows. The sister chapel is in a greater state of disrepair with no remaining roof structure and badly eroded stone work. The remainder of the site is kept in a good state of presentation as it is part of the well-maintained cemetery grounds.

The works are necessary to provide a community facility in the area for local residents/ members of the public. The former chapel, a listed building, requires urgent attention to its fabric/structure to save it from falling into disrepair. The premises satisfy both requirements. The proposed internally re-configures the chapel whilst restoring the external appearance to its original state. In order to retain the character of the building we are reusing the existing window openings with new contemporary casement windows to improve the thermal performance of the building.

The general catchment area for the centre is Wombwell, Darfield and Stairfoot and anyone will be able to attend there. The existing cemetery is open to the public every day between the hours of 08:00 to 20:00 in the winter and 08:00 to 21:00 in the summer. The opening hours for the community centre are likely to be 09:00 to 22:00

The conversion allows for the installation of toilets including an access/baby change toilet and a meeting room/community hall as well as a small kitchen area.

The only external works proposed are to resurface the access road

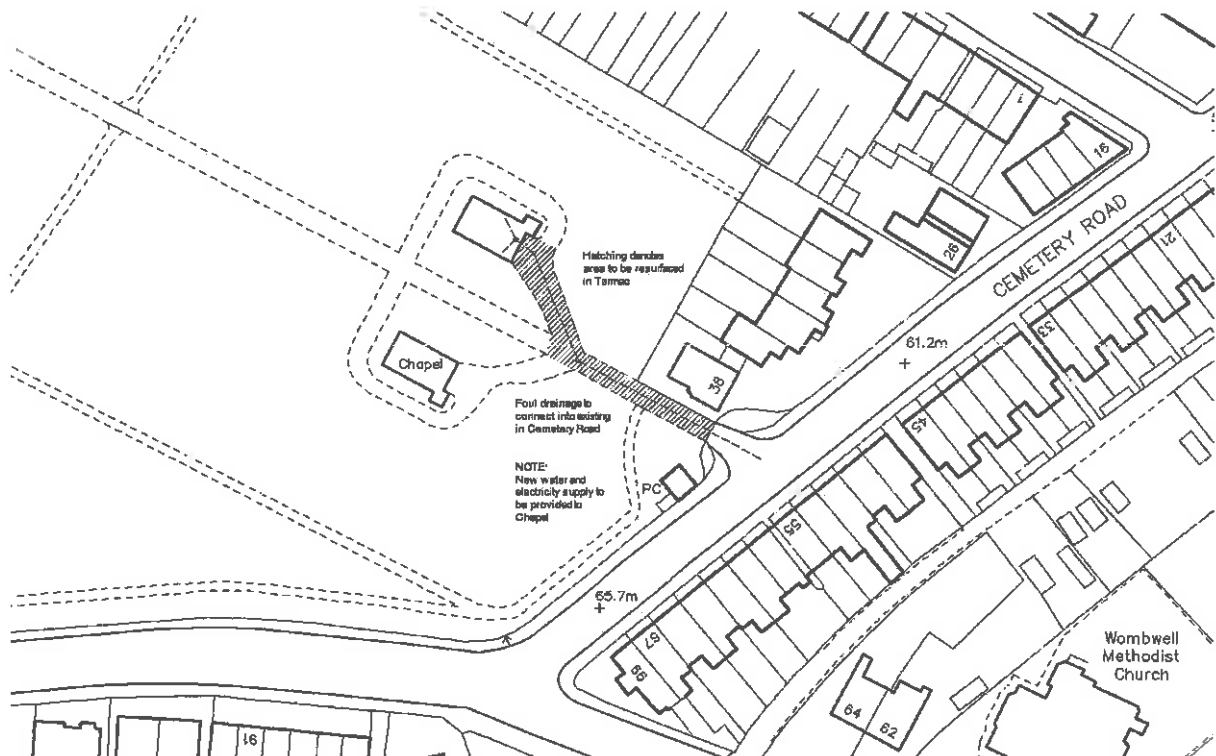


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Amount

The total site area is approximately 45,500m² of which the existing building accounts for 87m² or 0.19% of the total area. Due to the nature of the site the predominant land usages is burial plots.

The site is to be retained in its existing condition with no works to the landscaping or boundary walls.

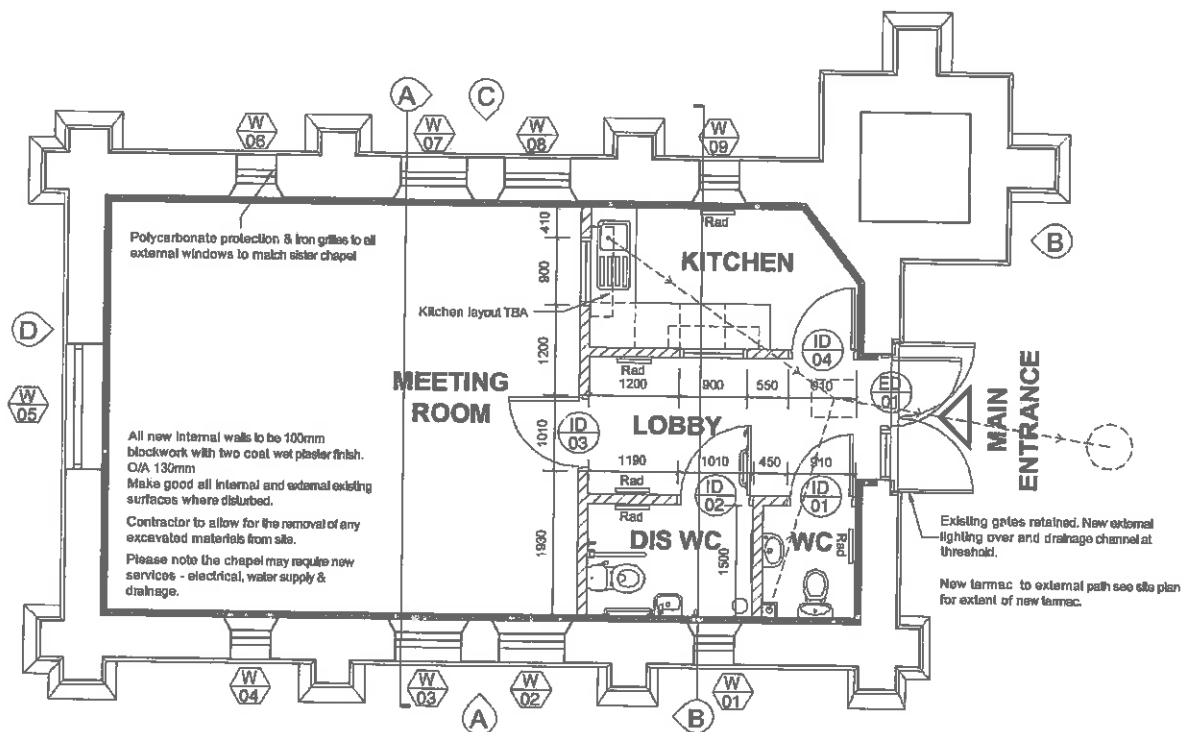


Proposed Site Plan

Layout

The proposed internal layout has been designed to retain the existing ecclesiastical features within the chapel. Care has been taken to allow for partitions and sanitary accommodation to be installed in a non-intrusive way, near the main entrance in order to minimise the length and disruption caused by below ground drainage. The existing ecclesiastical features at high level are to be retained "untouched" and segregated from the development by a new suspended ceiling. The site as a whole will be unaffected by the works, both in layout and use. There will be extra foot fall expected for the community centre but with the hard surface paths and the proximity of the chapel to the main entrance it is not envisaged that this will have any impact of the ground. The proposals include external lighting which will improve the safety of the site whilst also improving its visual aesthetics during none daylight hours.

The proposals also include the resurfacing of the external access road.

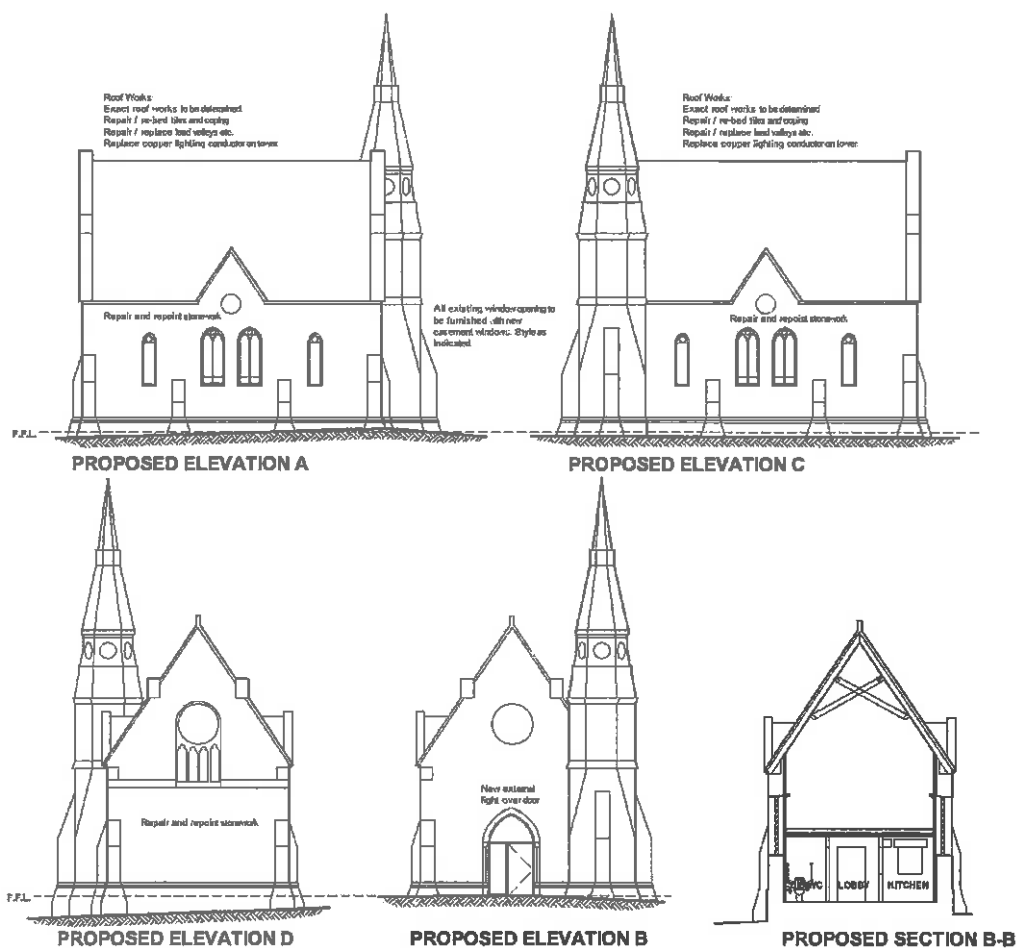


PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR PLAN

Appearance

The external appearance of the building is to remain unaltered to maintain the overall look of the twin chapels. However the existing boarding on the windows is to be removed and new casement windows installed to suit the existing openings.

The proposed design has no impact on the overall look and feel of the site but it will restore a building that would otherwise fall into disrepair.



Proposed Elevations

Scale

The proposals do not increase the existing footprint as the works are all internal. However, the Chapel will benefit from new glazing to replace boarding on the Chancel and Nave rose windows (pictured right). The main door will be renewed with a contemporary glazed door with a side and fan light to suit the opening. The existing gate on the main entrance is to be retained. The windows on the side elevations (pictured below) are to have new secondary internal glazing and metal bars to match sister chapel. Although the bars are an essential security feature on the sister chapel they will be primarily an aesthetic “to match” feature on this one.



The main entrance will also benefit from new external lighting to replace the existing damaged exterior light under the Nave rose.



Side Elevation of the North chapel

Landscape and Sustainability

The site is within the curtilage of the cemetery and therefore is dominated with headstones and mature trees including Yew and Sycamore (amongst others). The soft landscaping is well maintained under an existing programme and in combination with the historic graves and ruined south chapel the site as a whole has a very endearing character. The trees in the vicinity of the buildings are of a sufficient distance to negate the need for any cutting back of the crown.



Chapels within Context of Cemetery

(North Chapel is in the distant left of the image)

Access

The existing established cemetery has good access with local bus routes passing close to the main entrance and a reasonably level approach is possible throughout most of the site. The site is readily visible from the main highway/entrance gates (pictured below) however good directional signage will be installed. It is envisaged that the main entrance will act as the primary pedestrian and vehicular access to the community centre. As can be seen below, currently the vehicular access through this route is controlled by a demountable bollard. This will be retained so as to control the flow of traffic into and through the site. All other site entry points are pedestrian only and are located off Summer Lane and Main Street. Currently there is no parking allowance within the site itself although informal parking to the edges of the access road is viable as the access road serves only the chapel and cemetery. On street parking on Cemetery Road is informal and available.

In summary the vehicular access arrangements are adequate for the purposes of the building.



Main entrance on Cemetery Road

Conclusion

The building is currently vacant and suffering from a lack of maintenance, ongoing vandalism and its general derelict demeanour detracts from the overall character of the cemetery.

The proposals will enhance the use of the building providing much needed community facilities to the greater Wombwell area and beyond.

The overall scale and external appearance of the building will be unaffected as the new windows (the only external alteration) will be in keeping with the building to suit the existing openings.

All effort has been made to provide good quality facilities while adhering to the wider public's need for maintaining the character of the grounds.

In conclusion it is considered that the proposals are acceptable in design and access terms and will sympathetically improve the overall character of the area.