

<b>PLANNING COMMITTEE</b>	<b>DATE: 09/12/2024</b>
<b>REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT HEAD OF DEPARTMENT</b>	

**Number: 2**

**Application Number: C24/0075/11/CR**

**Date Registered: 19/02/2024**

**Application Type: Listed Application**

**Community: Bangor**

**Ward: Bangor - East**

**Proposal: Internal alterations for the conversion of the building into nine living units**

**Location: Bangor Independent School, Ffordd Gwynedd, Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 1DT**

**Summary of the Recommendation: Approve with conditions**

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## 1. Description:

- 1.1 This is a listed building application to convert the building into nine self-contained living units and to undertake internal alterations. The last and most recent use of the building was as an independent school which closed some time ago. It is proposed to adapt the building to create 9 living units, 3 two-bed units and 6 one-bed units that would include a kitchen, living room, bathroom and en-suite rooms. There would be three units on the lower ground floor, two on the ground floor, two on the first floor and two on the second floor.
- 1.2 On the lower ground floor the building will mainly remain as it is, where there are some of the rooms with the original slate shelves - it is intended to retain these as they are in two rooms. It is proposed to have three units on this floor, and this would entail some work to cut through the existing walls to create new openings within the unit and create larger rooms. It is proposed to retain the existing windows as they are and to install secondary glazing within the building. Also, on this floor there are two external doors, and it is proposed to close these up internally due to flooding issues. There will be no change to the building's exterior appearance as the doors would remain as they are, however, these doors will not be operational. Also, forming part of this floor is an outbuilding, a former stable and coach-house ancillary to the main use, which has been used as storage and a garage in the past, and it is proposed to retain these mainly as they are as storage and a space for refuse and recycling without any insulation or upgrading work. There is also a detached outbuilding near the rear, again it is not proposed to change this but to use it as storage.
- 1.3 On the ground floor it is proposed to create two units. Again, extensive alterations are not proposed as the proposal follows the current order of rooms. It is proposed to retain the existing stairs and create some new partitions to create new rooms and to use the main entrance and the hallway as a community space for the units and up the stairs. There is also a second set of stairs within the building, and the second set (which are not as decorative as the main stairs) will be located within one of the units but will be closed up. The stairs will remain within the building but will not be for use, and it would be possible to use them again in the future if required. The wall insulation work will also form part of the proposal by using suitable materials for a historic building. As the above, the existing windows will be restored, and secondary glazing installed.
- 1.4 On the first floor it is proposed to create two units again by using the existing layout but by installing some new partitions to create new rooms. The second set of stairs would be split to locate an en-suite bathroom, but again the stairs will continue to be out of sight. It is intended to insulate the walls and the vent from the kitchens would be ventilated from the existing chimneys to avoid any new external vent on the building's walls.
- 1.5 The second-floor alterations are minor as the rooms will remain as they are, despite locating the two units. Secondary glazing will be installed, insulation work to the walls and the vent through the chimney and work to close off the stairs will form the plan.
- 1.6 The site is located within its own curtilage and within the development boundary in the city centre within the conservation area, and it is a Grade II listed building.

## 2. Relevant Policies:

- 2.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and paragraph 2.1.2 of Planning Policy Wales emphasise that planning decisions should be in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Planning considerations include National Planning Policy and the Local Development Plan.
- 2.2 The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 places a duty on the Council to take reasonable steps in exercising its functions to meet the 7 well-being goals within the Act. This

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report has been prepared in consideration of the Council's duty and the 'sustainable development principle', as set out in the 2015 Act. In reaching the recommendation, the Council has sought to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

**2.3 Gwynedd and Anglesey Joint Local Development Plan 2011-2026 (LDP) adopted 31 July 2017:-**

PS20: Preserving and where appropriate enhancing heritage assets

**2.4 National Policies:**

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12 - February 2024)

Technical Advice Note (TAN)

TAN24: The Historic Environment.

Managing Change to Listed Buildings in Wales

**3. Relevant Planning History:**

C17/0382/11/LL Internal and external alterations to change use of former museum into a restaurant, wine bar and 2 living units - Approved 22/09/2017.

C17/0381/11/CR Internal and external alterations to change use of former museum into a restaurant, wine bar and 2 living units - Approved 22/09/2017.

**4. Consultations:**

Town Council: Not received

British Archaeological Council: Not received

Ancient Monuments Society: Statutory Remit Historic Buildings & Places (HB&P) is a consultee for Listed Building Consent applications, as required by the Listed building applications and decisions (duty to notify National Amenities Societies and the Royal Commission) (Wales) Direction 2022. We are concerned with historic assets of all types and all ages, including conservation areas and undesignated heritage.

Comments: Thank you for notifying HB&P of the above application for listed building consent. We have reviewed the documentation available on your website and provide the following comments.

HB&P has no objection to the principle of the proposed change of use to apartments. While not included in the documentation, we have seen images associated with the recent sale of the building that confirm that much of the original decoration and ornamentation has

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previously been stripped out and removed.

The main concern with this application relates to the loss of the secondary stair. There is very little analysis of this feature, but it is important to understanding the original function of the building as The Canonry and the separation of the formal spaces from the domestic and servant functions. The plan form of the building generally remains intact, and given the loss of the interior decorations, this, including the location of the stairs, contributes much to the significance and architectural interest of this building.

The proposed plans appear quite confusing, and while it is clear the stair would be partitioned off at first floor and removed between the first and second floor, it is unclear how the stair is to be managed between the separate apartments at basement and ground level. The blocking off/ enclosure of the stair may retain it, but it raises future concerns about long term maintenance and access that could affect the wider building.

Keeping a historic feature in use is the best way to ensure it is maintained, and HB&P therefore recommends that this part of the scheme is reevaluated. Subject to further design, we would encourage consideration of a multi-level apartment that incorporates the secondary stair. The second floor apartment in particular has limited head room and living space that would benefit from the additional floor space this would provide.

This advice is provided in accordance with Paragraph 5.9 and 5.13 of Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment (TAN 24, May 2017) and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which require planning authorities to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

The Twentieth Century Society: Not received

The Georgian Group: Not received

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings: Not received

The Victorian Society: Thank you for consulting the Victorian Society about this application. We write to advise on the proposed scheme.

We would like to support the comments made by HBAP regarding the secondary staircase and retention of remaining historic fabric:

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The Twentieth Century Society: Not received

Senior Conservation Officer: No consultation - The Conservation Unit dealt with this application, and therefore the Conservation Unit's professional opinion has been included in the report and is therefore not reported separately.

Public Consultation: A notice was posted on site, in the press and nearby residents were informed. No correspondence were received on the application.

## 5. Assessment of the material planning considerations:

### The impact of the development on the setting and character of the Listed Building

5.1 Paragraph 5.13 of Technical Advice Note (TAN) 24: The Historic Environment, states that Local Planning Authorities should consider the following matters:

- The importance and grade of the building and its intrinsic architectural or historic interest
- The physical features of the building which justify its listing and contribute to its significance, including any features of importance such as the interior, which may have come to light after the building's inclusion on the list
- The contribution of curtilage and setting to the significance of the building, as well as its contribution to its local scene
- The impact of the proposed works on the significance of the building
- The extent to which the proposed works would bring substantial community benefits for example, by contributing to the area's economy or the enhancement of its local environment

5.2 The application involves work to adapt and convert the building into residential units from the former school use. The building is very striking in the centre of Bangor City and stands within its own curtilage, with wrought iron railings along it. It is proposed to adapt the building to create 9 living units, 3 two-bed units and 6 one-bed units that would include a kitchen, living room,

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bathroom and en-suite rooms. There would be three units on the lower ground floor, two on the ground floor, two on the first floor and two on the second floor.

- 5.3 As noted above, on the lower ground floor the building will mainly remain in its original form, where some of the rooms have the original slate shelves - it is intended to keep these as they are in two rooms to remain as storage, not as part of the units. It is proposed to have three units on this floor and this would entail some work to cut through the existing walls to create new openings within the unit and create larger rooms. Only openings within the existing walls are proposed, rather than to take down all the walls; this would enable the main walls to be retained in their original location.
- 5.4 Also on this floor there are two external doors, and the intention is to close these up internally due to flooding issues. There will be no change to the building's exterior appearance as the doors would remain as they are, however, these doors will not be operational and therefore as there will be no alterations to the external appearance of the building it is not deemed that this element is likely to affect the property's character. Also, forming part of this floor in the back is an outbuilding, a former stable and coach-house ancillary to the main use, which has been used as storage and a garage in the past, and it is proposed to retain these mainly as they are as storage and a space for refuse and recycling without any insulation or upgrading work. There is also a detached outbuilding near the rear; again it is not proposed to change this but to use it as storage. Again it is deemed that this would be a suitable treatment for the building where there will be no residential use and therefore no insulation work is required and this would enable the building to remain as it is.
- 5.5 On the ground floor it is proposed to create two units. Again, extensive alterations are not proposed as the proposal follows the current order of rooms. It is proposed to retain the existing stairs and create some new partitions to create new rooms and to use the main entrance and the hallway as a community space for the units and up the stairs. There is also a second set of stairs within the building, and the second set (which are not as decorative as the main stairs) will be located within one of the units but will be closed up. Two of the amenities' groups have expressed concern about this element of the application and have requested more details and confirmation of the work, having discussed this further with the Agent it is clear that these stairs will not be removed at all but will stay as they are, but work within the units. Some elements would be closed up by erecting a partition to create a bathroom, another section would be storage, but this would be work that could be removed in the future if required, and therefore it is not deemed that this would have an adverse impact on the property's character but would enable it to have a new long-term use.
- 5.6 On the first floor it is proposed to create two units again by using the existing layout but by installing some new partitions to create new rooms. The second set of stairs would be split to locate an en-suite bathroom, but again the stairs will continue but will be out of sight. It is intended to insulate the walls and the vent from the kitchens by ventilating them from the existing chimneys to avoid any new external vent on the building's walls. All the new units will create new kitchens and bathrooms, and these will have vents, it is proposed to install these within the building, via the new services and out through the existing chimneys and this is to be welcomed.
- 5.7 The second-floor alterations are minor as the rooms will remain as they are despite locating the two units where there is hardly any alteration work to be done. It is intended to install secondary glazing throughout the building, which is again to be welcomed as this would mean that the original windows will be retained and renovated. It is felt that it would be acceptable for this to be conditioned to the details to be approved beforehand.
- 5.8 It is felt that the proposal is a significant improvement to use the building once more rather than standing empty, and the proposal is also sensitive in terms of the alteration work by undertaking the minimum of internal work to respect the setting, together with retaining the main features such as the windows and stairs, together with the doors on the lower floor that are to be closed up.

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It is therefore felt that the proposal satisfies the requirements of policies PS20 of the LDP as well as conservation guidance and is acceptable for approval in accordance with the following noted conditions.

**6. Conclusions:**

- 6.1 In accordance with the above assessment, it is deemed that the proposal respects the building by keeping the alterations to a minimum and also by retaining the main features within the building, which is also work that may be removed in the future if need be in a way that is sympathetic to the building itself. It is the Senior Conservation Officer who has prepared this application with delegated powers from Cadw, and therefore there is no need to refer the application to Cadw should the application be approved.

**7. Recommendation:**

- 7.1 To approve the application subject to the following conditions:-
1. 5 years
  2. In accordance with the plans.
  3. Photographic record
  4. Details of any vents and flues to be agreed beforehand.
  5. Details of any secondary glazing to be agreed beforehand.
  6. Any replaced window to be in accordance with the existing window.