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Heritage Design and Access statement
The Old Church, Chittoe, Chippenham SN15 2EL



1 Introduction

The Old Church is a grade II listed converted church in the small village of Chittoe, just east of Melksham. The original church, formerly Church of Saint Mary, was constructed in 1845 and converted into a dwelling in 1986. The applicants have called it home for over 30 years, and now propose the addition of a photovoltaic array to the south pitches of the nave and chancel so as to improve the building's environmental performance.

2 Site context

The Old Church is located on Chittoe Heath, a small country lane off the Devizes Road (A342). It is set back but partly visible from the narrow lane, accessed via a private driveway bordered with mature oak and yew trees. The lane runs along the north side of the church.

The dwelling entrance is on the south side of the nave through the church's gabled porch which leads straight through to the current open plan kitchen/ dining/ living area. The external perimeter of the building has level access and ramps around making it externally wheelchair accessible.

The Old Church is Grade II listed (listing entry number (1365546):

II Former Anglican parish church, to be converted (1986) to house, 1845 by T.H.

Wyatt. Squared sandstone rubble with ashlar dressings, slate roofs; coped gabled and west end gabled bellcote. Three-bay aisleless nave with south porch and north transept, (added 1870), chancel with north organ chamber and south vestry attached. Decorated Gothic style with three light east, west and north transept north windows, two light nave windows and single lights to chancel sides, all with hoodmoulds. Clasping buttresses, raised plinth and moulded sill-course. Gabled south porch. South-east vestry gabled each end with east door. North-east gabled organ-chamber in angle to chancel and polygonal porch attached.

Interior: tall proportions with timber roofs; arch-braced collar trusses to nave and transept, boarded chancel roof. Moulded shafted chancel arch and moulded arch to north transept. Moulded subsidiary arches to north east organ chamber. All fittings except stone pulpit and tiled reredos removed.

3 Intentions

Although not yet fully executed, the current Listed Building Consent from 2019 for replacement entrance doors includes (as per the attached south elevation) significant dormer windows to both nave and chancel roofs as well as conservation roof windows. The dormers have not yet been installed and it is now proposed that in conjunction with the PVs installation, they will be withdrawn from the consented works which is believed will enhance the appearance of the Church building for the long term.
As shown in the photographs, the south elevation of the church is seen in the landscape context of significant tree and shrub planting in the churchyard so the installation of the all-black PV panels over the current slates will be a relatively modest change in the church's appearance, especially in the longer distance accessible landscape views. The PV installer's proposal allows for the partial shading from closer trees with appropriate optimisers for affected panels.
The closer 'public viewing' of the church from the east, north and west will remain unchanged.
No other external alterations are proposed.
The batteries and inverters will be accommodated in the existing loft space as shown on the upper floor plan.

4 Design Principles

The two arrays of panels – 30 to the nave and 16 to the chancel - all black in landscape format at 1134 X 1724 spaced 20mm apart are to be set symmetrically on the nave and chancel roofs installed above the existing slates but respectfully below the encompassing stonework details of bellcote, gables and ridges which will remain undisturbed.

5 Landscape

There will be no alteration or impacts to the existing landscaping on site.

6 Access provision

Externally there will be no change to the access, as the proposed PVs are at roof level and the batteries and inverters are to be in the loft.

7 Sustainability

The PV arrays will generate significant power – 17KWpeak – and in conjunction with batteries to be installed internally will allow the applicants to generate 18 megawatts annually - more useful electric power than they expect to consume, including for EV charging: so a marked improvement in the sustainability of the building.

8 Conclusion

The proposed PV installation will provide a marked and appropriate improvement of the sustainability of this converted church with a modest (and reversible) visual effect on the south roof pitches, arguably less significant than the 3 dormer windows permitted under previous consents which will no longer be installed.