

**Alexandra House
19 Birmingham Road
Cowes**

Construction of Jetty



**Planning, Design, Access and Heritage
Statement**

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1. Introduction

1.1 Alexandra House is a substantial property fronting onto the river at Birmingham Road, Cowes. The property was formerly a Wesleyan Chapel, but for many years has been a single, private residential property. The proposal is to substantially renovate the property and add a side extension, together with a new timber dock to extend the existing seawall and a swimming pool within the garden. The rear elevation of the property, which is not original, will be remodelled. The proposal aims to retain the character and features of the building while providing modern, enhanced accommodation.

2. Designations.

2.1 The property is a Grade II listed building (designated 9th August 1979) and is within the Cowes Conservation Area. Listed Building Consent is needed for the proposed works which will need to respect not only the immediate curtilage, but also the wider context of the Conservation area.

2.2 Planning permission will also be needed for the proposed side extension and for the timber extension to the seawall and the swimming pool within the garden area.



Fig 1 The Plan shows the location and extent of the property and the existing jetty at the rear.

2.3 There are other listed buildings fronting the river at Birmingham Road in the vicinity of the application site including Blenheim House at 9 Birmingham Road, and Medina Lodge at 25 Birmingham Road. Neither of these properties is immediately adjacent to Alexandra House. (see Fig 1)

3. History of the building

3.1 According to the 1851 Religious Census of Hampshire the property is described as;

Wesleyan Methodist, West Cowes – built in 1831, with space for a congregation of 820. The minister in 1851 was John Parry, the Wesleyan Minister for West Cowes.

3.2 Included within the Street Directories at the Records office is the following entry for 1879:

The Wesleyan Chapel situated in Birmingham Road is a neat substantial edifice, with accommodation for 650 persons. The present chapel, which superseded a very humble one in Bath Road, was erected in the year 1831 and opened for Divine Service on the 29th September of that year, by the Reverend Dr Clarke. The increase in the congregation rendered necessary several alterations and enlargements of the original building. In 1832, side galleries were erected and an organ added. In 1849, a large vestry was attached, and in 1868 it became necessary to include the vestry in the body of the chapel and at the same time the old-fashioned pews were removed, and the body of the chapel fitted with seats of polished pine. The total cost has been about £2,700. The interior of the chapel has an appearance of great neatness and comfort and in the winter is warmed by hot-air apparatus. A Sunday School is attached at the back of the chapel. Rev J Kirtland Minister.

3.3 A search was made of the Non Conformist registers and records held at the Records office for any plans of the building, but unfortunately there do not appear to be any records of this chapel.

3.4 The SMR record held by the IWC describes the property as follows.

Isle of Wight County Archaeology and Historic Environment Service Monument Full Report

19/04/2011

SMR Number

10510 - MIW8009

Site Name

Alexandra Hall, 19 Birmingham Road, Cowes

Record Type

Building

Monument Types and Dates

CHAPEL (Early C19 - 1831 AD)

Evidence EXTANT BUILDING
Main Building STONE
Material

Description and Sources

Description

A former Wesleyan hall of 1831. Built of ashlar. 2 storeys and attics. Pilasters flank the front. Cornice & pediment over concealing roof. Modern ground floor built out. 3 windows with glazing bars. Centre window bay projects. Tympana have 4 centred heads. Lunette window in the pediment. (1)

[1. List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest; Borough of Medina (Cowes Area), DOE, 9 August 1979, p.9, SZ4995NE 3/21]

Unchanged since original survey. (2)

[2. Field visit R. Loader, 20.5.1999 (coastal audit)]

Built in 1831 as a Methodist Chapel; it is now residential. The ashlar front has a pediment, but the windows are 'Gothick' with four centred heads.

[Lloyd, D.W and Pevsner, N. 2006. The Buildings of England: Isle of Wight. Yale University Press. p. 124]

On 1862 OS map as Methodist Chapel, on 1898 OS map as Methodist Chapel (Wesleyan), shown on 1909 OS map but not named, on 1946 OS map as Hall. In use as dwelling called Alexandra Hall. Photos taken. [Field visit 18th June 2010, R. Waller]

Chapel in West Cowes erected in 1831, pulpits made by Mr White and made of Mahogany, teak, yellow wood with ebony, satin and fancy wood mouldings.

[Dyson, 1865, "Methodism on the Isle of Wight"]

Built in 1831 as a Wesleyan Chapel with 550 seats. Of Swanage stone, the front elevation is ashlar with pilasters. It has 4 centred arched window-heads with tympana, and a lunette in a full-span pediment. The large hall at the rear was used as a Sunday school,. Sold in 1901, when the church opposite was built, it became offices for Samuel Saunders when he first came to Cowes in 1901 with the Saunders Patent Launch Building Syndicate Ltd. Later it was used for amateur dramatics, dancing, political and other meetings. The basement contained a rifle range, used in winter by the local club. After the war, Jimmy Rush had a small printing business operating in the basement. The whole building is now a private residence [Groves, J, 2004, "Cowes: The Jewel of the Solent", 2nd edition p.51]

The Wesleyan Chapel of 820 seats was built in 1831. It became an entertainment venue, called Alexander Hall, in 1901 when the chapel services were transferred to the new building along the road. It was converted into residential flats in 1960's.

[Len Pullinger, pers comm, Nonconformist Chapels Project 2010]

The Methodists built this chapel when the one at Bath Road (HER 10496) became too small. The schoolroom was built in the basement of this building and galleries were added in 1833. In 1849 the church was considerably lengthened, but became too small for the congregation by the end of the 19th Century and the new church on Birmingham Road (IWHER 4350) was built as a replacement. Notes from this document in back-up file.

[Cowes Methodist church, Centenary Pamphlet 1901-2001]

Sources

Graphic material: Historic Buildings Record Photographs.

Location

National Grid Reference

SZ 49708 95880 (point)

SZ49NE

Point

Administrative Areas

19th Century Parish

Northwood, Isle of Wight

Civil Parish

Isle of Wight

Address/Historic Names - None recorded

Designations, Statuses and Scorings

Associated Legal Designations

Conservation Area

Cowes

Active

DIW2111

Listed Building (II) - 417932

ALEXANDRA HALL

Active

DIW1532



Bundesarchiv, Bild 102-07836
Foto: o. Ang. | 1. Mai 1929

Fig 2 The speed boat Miss England, built in 1929 at Alexandra House.

3.5 The Chapel use came to an end in 1901 when the Methodist Church opposite was opened and the building became used as offices for Samuel Saunders, later to become Saunders Roe, a major boat builders. The boat Miss England, which at one time held the world speed record, was constructed at the premises (see Fig 2) The building subsequently had a number of other uses as a meeting hall, and for amateur dramatics and dancing. The building was also used for a printing business.

4. Current building

4.1 The external appearance of the building remains original in respect of the front elevation. The rear elevation however was significantly altered sometime after the Second World War, although no records appear to exist to show the original rear elevation. For many years, there was a separate building at the rear of the premises thought to have been used as a Sunday School. This building, which almost completely covered the rear elevation of the building, can be clearly seen in Fig 3

4.2 The following elements of the building are considered to be original.

- Front railings
- Undercroft
- Front elevation complete
- Side elevations masonry
- Roof and roof structure
- Ground floor structure
- Front elevation windows in part, significant replacement evident
- North garden wall hidden by vegetation



Fig 3 A photograph believed to have been taken in the 1960's. Alexandra House is on the extreme left of the photo marked by the arrow. Above and to the left is the former cinema building, now a flat development (22 Birmingham Road). The photo clearly shows that there is a building at the rear of Alexandra House, obscuring the rear elevation.

4.3 The front door is believed to be a later replacement and the fenestration at the side of the building is also believed not to be original. In fact, there was a building constructed at the side of the Chapel linking it to the neighbouring property, some time after the original building was constructed. This building is thought to have been used as a store and it is unclear when it was demolished. (see fig 4)

4.4 The interior of the building was substantially altered when the building was converted for living accommodation and little remains reflecting the original use of the building as a chapel apart from the original ground floor, external walls and roof structure.

5. Planning history

5.1 The following records have been extracted from the planning register.

- *An application for change of use of Alexandra Hall, Birmingham Road, Cowes, to any purposes specified in Class X of The Town and Country Planning Uses Classes Order 1950, temporary conditional approval 2 March 1956 until 31 March 1963(TCP/4882)*
- *An application for the continued use of Alexandra Hall, Birmingham Road, Cowes, for storage purposes, conditional approval 30 May 1963 (TCP/4882(2))*
- *An application for change of use of Alexandra Hall, and 21 Birmingham Road, Cowes, to any purposes specified in Class I, II, and III of The Town and Country Planning Uses Classes Order 1950, conditional approval 2 March 1956 (TCP/4882A)*
- *An application for the erection of seven units of living accommodation and the formation of vehicular access, at 17-21 Birmingham Road, Cowes, conditional approval 26 September 1963 (TCP/4882B)*
- *An application for the conversion of the existing building into living accommodation and the formation of vehicular access at Alexandra Hall, Birmingham Road, Cowes, conditional approval 16 September 1966 (TCP/4882C)*
- *An application for the construction of pier and pontoons at foreshore in front of Alexandra House, Dragmar House and 13 Birmingham Road, Cowes, conditional approval 9 September 1971 (TCP/4882D)*
- *An application for pontoon, 15-17 Birmingham Road, Cowes, conditional approval 9 April 2001 (TCP/11370/G/P/351/01)*



Fig 4. The original chapel building showing the infill building between it and its neighbouring building, which has subsequently been demolished and replaced by a modern structure. It is thought this photo dates to about 1900.

5.2 The planning records indicate that the building was used for storage purposes up until 1963 when approval was granted for conversion of the building to seven flats. It is believed that this permission was never implemented however, and a subsequent permission was granted in 1966 for use of the building as a single unit of accommodation. The building has been in this use ever since. Subsequent approvals have been granted for the pier and pontoons at the rear of the property.

5.3 During the varied uses of the building since 1901, almost all the fixtures, fittings and features of the original interior have been removed. The buildings at the rear and to the side were also demolished, although it is not clear on what date this occurred. The exterior of the building together with the fenestration has however been well preserved, and is largely original, apart from the rear elevation and the side fenestration

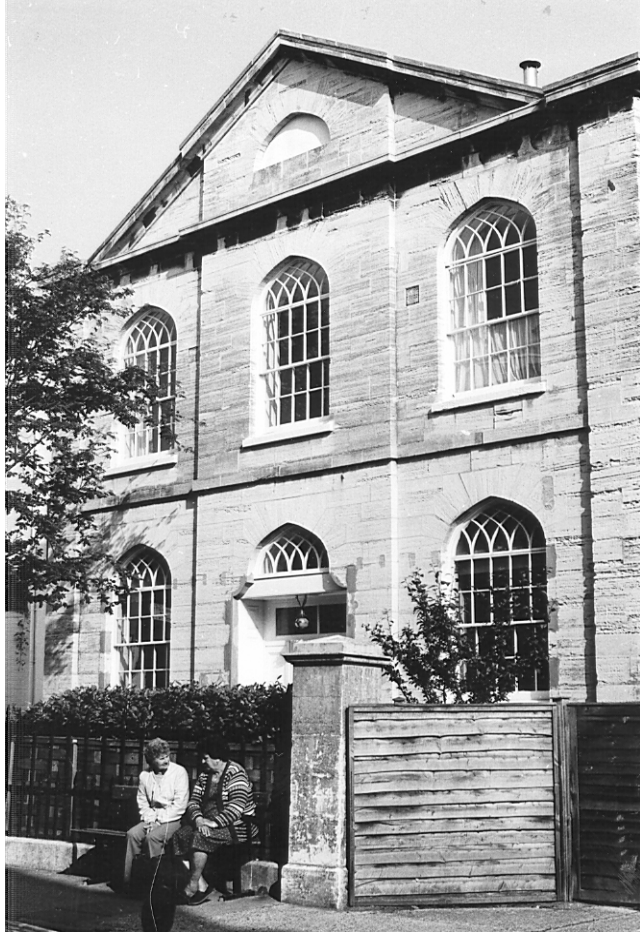


Fig 5. The property pictured in 1984

6. The proposal

6.1 The proposal is to construct a jetty at the rear of the premises across the foreshore. The jetty will be constructed of timber on timber piles. There will be minimal impact on the hydrological regime and the proposal will be in keeping with the general pattern of waterside development in the area. These works will require additional permissions which are being applied for. The existing crane structure will be removed. The jetty will measure approximately 16 m x 4.7 m giving a total area of 75m²

7. Ecological issues

7.1 The proposed jetty extension will be located on an area of inter- tidal mud on the foreshore. The site is outside the Solent SAC (Special Area of Conservation) but the area is considered to represent National BAP (Bio-diversity Action Plan) habitat. The foreshore here does have a considerable amount of man-made debris covering the

mud and it is proposed that this is removed to reinstate the mud flat habitat. This will compensate for the ten wooden support piles that will be sunk into the mud to support the jetty structure. It is estimated that these piles will impact on an area of less than 1m² which is less than the area of mud that can be recovered through removal of debris.



Fig 6 The rear of the property

8. Flooding

The site is within an area subject to coastal flooding but the jetty will cause no additional flood risk



Fig 7 The area for the proposed jetty shown at low tide

9. Planning considerations

The jetty will provide additional mooring facilities adjacent to the property and is a suitable use for the location.

10. Design issues

Many similar structures have been constructed in the area and the scale and design of this simple structure will be commensurate with these.

11. Access

The jetty will allow for improved access to the water front by occupiers of the house.

