



Ein cyf/Our ref KS/00554/17

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

28 February 2017

Thank you for your letter of 8 February 2017 requesting a copy of the assessment of St Winefride's RC Church, Aberystwyth for listing as a building of special architectural or historic interest.

The Historic Environment Service (Cadw) has assessed the building for listing on four separate occasions in 1987, 2008, 2011 and 2012. I understand that it falls short of the high standard necessary to be listed at the national level and there is no basis for it being reconsidered for listing unless there is compelling new evidence concerning the significance of the building.

As requested, I have attached a copy of the assessment which explains the rationale behind the previous decisions which will shortly be published online at:

<http://gov.wales/about/foi/responses/?lang=en>.

Assessment

Historic Interest

The church is noted as being the first R.C. church to be built in Ceredigion, and though this is clearly of regional interest, it does not equate to a significant role in the history of Welsh Roman Catholicism in the 19th century. Several Catholic churches of an earlier date are listed, including the church in Monmouth which was one of the earliest RC churches to be built in Britain after such buildings were first legally permitted following the Catholic Relief Act of 1791, as well as several from the 1850s. The context for building this church seems to be the expansion of Aberystwyth as a sea-side resort in the later 19th century, rather than any significant milestone in the history of the church itself. This historic interest was not considered to be sufficiently compelling to support a case for listing.

Architectural Interest

The Church (with adjoining presbytery) was built in 1874-5 to designs by George Jones and Son, Aberystwyth. The architectural value of the church is limited by the incompleteness of the original building - a bell-tower was planned but never completed - and by changes necessitated by structural problems, including the removal of a rose window in the east wall in 1934 and the rebuilding of the entire east wall in 1953. The original design was for a relatively simple structure which was not particularly architecturally distinguished. This subsequent loss of original detail has further undermined the building's architectural interest. On architectural grounds it compares unfavourably with other listed Roman Catholic churches in Wales.

Historical Associations

Well documented historical associations of a building's importance to Wales will increase the case for its listing but normally there should be some quality or interest in the physical fabric of the building. There were several influential Catholic thinkers associated with this church in the twentieth century (with an important written legacy), but the absence of quality and interest in the physical fabric of the building means that these historical associations do not in themselves constitute sufficient grounds for listing.