

From: Cadw
Sent: Tuesday, August 20, 2024 4:53 PM
To: Cadw officials
Cc: Cadw officials
Subject: RE: Application Ref: 24/0868/FUL - Troedrhifedwen Llanbister Road
Llandrindod Wells Powys LD1 5UP

Hi [redacted] [inspector] ,

Thanks for this assessment of the evidence put forward by Historic Building & Places opposing the proposed demolition of Troedrhifedwen.

It is quite unfortunate that the former inspector's listing inspection notes are so brief and inconclusive, because in my view the below amounts to new evidence. I agree reinspection is necessary to assess to what degree the features and phasing overlooked by [redacted] [the former inspector] are evident on the ground.

Hi [redacted] [Head of Branch],

As discussed, we've previously been asked to consider this building by the Royal Commission, CPAT (as-was) and the LPA's conservation officer (twice), and we've been quite definite that the C20 alterations and poor condition put this below the bar for listing. We wrote to the owner specifically ruling out listing in Nov 2022.

I wouldn't wish to pre-empt the inspector's recommendation, but listing now will be controversial, and demolition will also be controversial.

Thanks

[Casework Team Leader]

From: Cadw
Sent: Tuesday, August 20, 2024 11:22 AM
To: Cadw
Subject: RE: Application Ref: 24/0868/FUL - Troedrhifedwen Llanbister Road
Llandrindod Wells Powys LD1 5UP

Hi ,

I've reviewed the HB&P comments and the HBR report by [redacted] [The Scourfield Consultancy] on iShare, which both strongly suggest that substantial C17 fabric survives within the house, in addition to surviving C18, C19 and C20 fabric evidencing the multi-phased development of the building. HB&P suggests that the principal (south) range and the rear 'parlour' wing are both around 50 years earlier than identified by [redacted] [The Scourfield Consultancy] in the HBR. I'm not clear what they are basing the date of 1550 for the south range upon, as much of the fabric from this range has been lost to early C19 rebuilding. The rear wing is of interest and deserving of further investigation as to its historic use, whether this was a parlour or another important space within the house. The quatrefoil timberwork is

of particular interest, despite its fragmentary survival and speaks to the prosperity and intention of the then owners in adding a 'statement' wing to the building.

The HBR historic development plans which demarcates the south elevation as C17 despite admitting it was reconstructed in c1820 is misleading and this is acknowledged by the HB&P. The building undoubtedly contains fabric of great age and thus high significance, and further significance can be attributed to the retention of multiple phases of development legible within the building fabric. Admittedly much of this is only visible because of the poor condition of the building, but its survival and its significance as both a record of the building's development and its relation to the wider development of houses within the Welsh Marches should not be discounted.

The C20 fabric is not of great quality and does negatively impact on the southern range, particularly the east elevation, the western chimney and the fenestration. However, after looking at the HBR and taking into account the opinions of the HB&P, I do not entirely agree with [redacted] [Cadw's Head of Regeneration and Conservation] conclusion that this overrules the historical, architectural and evidential values contained within the multiple phases of surviving fabric elsewhere in the building.

I feel that given the threat of demolition, coupled with the evident complexity of this building and the evidence put forwards by the HB&P then this is worthy of re-inspection. However, I would be very happy to hear your thoughts on this.

Best wishes,

[inspector]

From: HB&P

Sent: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 11:15 AM

To: Planning Consultations

Subject: Application Ref: 24/0868/FUL - Troedrhifedwen Llanbister Road
Llandrindod Wells Powys LD1 5UP

FAO: Case Officer

Address: Troedrhifedwen Llanbister Road Llandrindod Wells Powys LD1 5UP

Application Ref: 24/0868/FUL

Proposal: Erection of a replacement dwelling and associated works.

Statutory Remit: Historic Buildings & Places (HB&P) is the working name of the Ancient Monuments Society and a consultee on Listed Building Consent applications, as per 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 planning application for demolition of Troedrhiwfedwen and construction of a replacement dwelling incorporating salvaged parts of the original house. HB&P are aware of Cadw's decision not to list this house due to the extent of unsympathetic alteration that has occurred through the centuries. While the rebuilding the front range in the early 1800s and the later C20 rendering, re-fenestration, and additions have harmed the authenticity of the house as a whole, there is clearly considerable historic, architectural and evidential value within the remaining structure that contributes to our understanding of the development of houses in the Welsh Marches and Radnorshire.

HB&P have not been able to visit the site, but based on the Historic Building Recording and other images and documents submitted for the application, we provide the following additional observations about the potential phases of development of this complex, multiphase dwelling for consideration:

Phase 1 - The main front range is circa 1550, likely a very long hall and presumably with a cross passage and parlour, the main range heated by either a smoke hood or a smoke bay, given the likely high social status of this range. The construction from this period would have been large square panels of wattle and daub set within wide and shallow timber uprights and cross rails. Such framing would have been prone to failure by the early 19th C especially sole plates as they suffer from rising damp, which would have contributed to the later rebuild of this range (phase 5).

Phase 2 - Another early wing was added to the rear around 1580 (the report says 1620 but no evidence is provided for this date), although the date range for such decorative framing consisting of small square panels decorated with quatrefoils and birds beak, is generally 1580 to 1620. The quatrefoiling enabled the use of small boughs previously discarded. The tall opening on the East elevation may have enabled egress into the upper chamber via an external staircase, (later removed), so that this upper chamber resembled a form of first floor hall with independent access. There is a possibility that this opening is simply a tall window lighting an internal staircase no longer present.

This wing is of considerable interest and significance largely because its true purpose is not fully known. The original purpose may have been for extended family occupation or for high social status visitors. It is described as a 'parlour' wing but the frontage range already had a parlour and in a building of such high social status from its inception it is unlikely that another parlour would be needed. The decorative quatrefoil gable is testament to the supreme importance of the initial concept of this wing and it is in need of more investigation both of the structure to try and determine the purpose of the earlier build and the ground to the east to search for the foundation of the possible staircase.

Phase 3 - In the mid-17thC both the ground floor and this first floor hall/ chamber appear to have been modified for agricultural storage, the original purpose of the upper chamber having been lost. The modification for agricultural storage appears to have involved the division of the ground floor into two bays with a door made purposely wider by modification of the original frame (see figure 26, HBR) presumably for easier access of goods or equipment, and the introduction of a

mezzanine at first floor level, the latter possibly an attempt to deter vermin from access to precious grain or wool.

Phase 4 - Possibly commensurate with phase 3 and a reflection of increased agricultural income, the creation of a central bay in the frontage range by cutting off the end of the original long hall, and defining this area with beams with an ovolo moulding, which date to around 1640 (ovolo mouldings were fashionable in Wales in the early-mid 17th century), to create an internal high social status hallway. This plus a multi-storey porch reflects an increased interest in symmetry and classicism. The chimney breast to the main hall may have been added at this.

Phase 5 – In the early 19th C, the main intervention was the complete removal of all the early framing of the frontage range both on its front and side elevations and utilising some of this framing to create stud walls clad in lath and lime plaster. By the early 20th century the lime plaster would have failed and been replaced with cement render. This late Georgian phase was accompanied by a raising of the eaves of the front elevation and re-cladding of the roof with regular slate, this being deemed both fashionable and more suitable for the shallower pitch required by this form of slate. It is possible that being such a high social status house it may have previously had a random stone or random slate roof or even thatch. The removal of what may have been a c1640 dog leg staircase to the rear of the 1640 hallway may have taken place also at this time. The symmetry already existed and this was enhanced this Georgian re-fronting. Various improvements took place internally with a new fire-beam to the mid 17thC chimney breast in G1 to support a cladding of timber cover plates, fashionable in the early 19thC with a beaded edging (now removed), as a form of picture frame to an early range, although an earlier fire-beam may exist behind this. It is very unusual for a fire-beam to be removed and so this needs further investigation. Access to the rear range at the upper level was introduced.

Phase 6 – Various improvements took place in the Victorian period as one would expect with the addition of marble or slate fire-piece in the east parlour of the main range. The date of the outshot is uncertain. It appears to have 17th C main beams and its function would always have been the processing of milk into cheese and butter as milk could not be taken any appreciable distance. This would have continued into the 19thC and ended with the coming of the nearby railway.

Phase 7 – The 20th century, particularly in the post war period has resulted in areas of repair and rebuild that resulted in much destruction, although these are fairly minor in the greater scheme of this building e.g. block-work on the East elevation of the main range.

Discussion: It is a complex, multi-phase building with all phases up to and including until around 1640 being of considerable significance for the understanding of the development of high social status Welsh Houses. Of particular significance is the rear range whose original function needs further investigation. The Georgian phases within the front range is part of a normal progression in the evolution of housing as different fashions and architectural styles take hold. While the Georgian phase has been incumbered by the C20 alterations, overall, the house displays a whole raft of fashionable improvements, but this should not detract from understanding the significance of the earlier phases, particularly the rear wing. The significance of the

whole building is thus the rapid improvements made by a rich yeoman farming family over a period of about 100 years in the 16th/17th C.

Total demolition of the house and the loss of the remaining timber frame and historic building fabric from this period would be extremely disappointing and regrettable. While some features are proposed to be reused within the replacement dwelling, they would be piecemeal and out of context and unrepresentative of the original structure. In terms of local policy, LDP objective 13 – Landscape and the Historic Environment at Item ii states that The Historic Environment To protect, preserve and/or enhance the distinctive historic environment, heritage and cultural assets of Powys, in particular local assets that are not statutorily protected or designated under national legislation, and to ensure that development respects local distinctiveness.

The rear ‘parlour’ wing appears to contain the most remaining fabric, including the important quatrefoiling and the HBR suggests this part of the building survives relatively unaltered, as it was not used or modernised in the most recent phase of the house. While it would be preferable that the whole building is repaired and restored, given the circumstances, it would be acceptable to allow the demolition of the Georgian phase and the front range – but retaining the beams and large chimney breast – the harm of which would be offset by the retention of the important rear ‘parlour’ wing. Once repaired and unencumbered by the later additions, it may be listable its own right.

We recognise there is a cost involved in doing this, so there must be a compromise on Council’s replacement dwelling policy, or an opportunity for enabling development, that can be made to save the important parts of this building while allowing for the construction of a new dwelling nearby, potentially retaining the ‘parlour’ wing as holiday accommodation. We would also encourage investigation of opportunities such as the Landmark Trust, who may be interested in supporting restoration of the building.

Recommendation: HB&P do not support the complete demolition of Troedrhifedwen, as proposed. As outlined above, we believe the remaining building fabric retains much historical and architectural evidence and that further investigations are needed to establish the original use of the rear ‘parlour’ wing and to fully understand the condition and options for the future of the structure. HB&P would recommend that a full condition and repair survey is carried out by a CARE accredited structural engineer with expertise in timber framed buildings. This would inform a full range of repairs and an appropriate way forward. The loss of the building would be deeply regrettable for the historic environment within Powys. We strongly believe that a compromise position needs to be taken to ensure the retention of the rear wing and the most important of the remaining building fabric.

If this application is to be approved, HB&P support the comments made by Heneb and agree that a thorough Level 4 recording should be conditioned and submitted for written approval before any demolition takes place.

Regards

Case Work

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