



PLANNING HERITAGE

Conservation Planning Consultancy



HERITAGE ASSESSMENT - TAN24 ISSUES

Project: Tyn Yr Heol House, 1 Henfaes Road, Tonna, Neath

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1 INTRODUCTION

This addendum has been compiled to show that the sachem meets the requirements of paragraph 5.15 of TAN24 which provide guidances on how the planning system considers the historic environment and Listed Building (LBC) applications.

Paragraph 5.15 set out that when seeking to demolish a listed building, which is acknowledged as being a last resort, then the following will be considerations:

- The condition of the building, the cost of repair and maintenance in relation to its importance and the value derived from its continued use. Where a building has been deliberately neglected, less weight will be given to these costs;
- The efforts made to keep the building in use or to secure a new use, including the offer of the unrestricted freehold of the building for sale at a fair market price that reflects its condition and situation; and
- The merits of the alternative proposals for the site, including whether the replacement buildings would meet the objectives of good design⁸² and whether or not there are substantial benefits for the community that would outweigh the loss resulting from demolition

The following addendum seeks to address the three points as set out in paragraph 5.15 above.

2 BACKGROUND

The Site was listed Grade II Listed in November 1993 as a Georgian Country House. The property suffered a fire in the early 2000s, which resulted in loss of the roof, internal floors and decorative fixtures and features within the house. The associated outbuildings, has by that time also largely collapsed or had been lost and are in a similar condition to the main house, which comprises a set of standing walls and these are unstable and partially collapsed. Following the fire all window and door openings of the house were infilled with concrete blocks to prevent access and provide structural support. However, the front façade has largely collapsed and the extent of loss is extensive. The property is in a ruinous state and can no longer be said to reflect the list description.

The Site was bought at auction in 2013, comprising the ruined house and outbuildings. The main house is unsafe as a result the damage caused by two fires. The intention was to renovate and restore Ty'n Yr Heol to create a wedding venue and on this basis a pre-application discussion was started with the Council. Since 2019 the Site has been secured with Heras fencing.

There have been two previous requests made to CADW seeking the delisting of the property made in 2017 and 2019. CADW considered at that time that the building had been correctly listed in 1993 as a late Georgian country house and that while it had suffered from severe damage since it was last surveyed in 2000, mainly due to the fire that occurred sometime after that date, CADW did not consider there to be sufficient grounds for delisting. However, CADW were of the opinion that it would be more appropriate for the future development of Ty'n yr Heol to be considered through the listed building consent process.

It has been acknowledged throughout the planning process, that the demolition of the listed building would be the last resort, however, the standing remains no longer retain the historic features, floors or form of the original house as all of which was destroyed as a direct or indirect result of the fire in the early 2000's. As a result, the unsafe and derelict condition of the standing remains prohibit the erection of propping, scaffold or temporary roof structure. The ruin has been exposed and unprotected for c.20yrs of

weathering and vegetation growth. In effect, the structure no longer reflects the form or appearance of the former Georgian House, which once stood in this location. As such, the heritage value of No.1 Henfaes Road is academic rather than architectural.

An important factor in the consideration of preserving the historic environment is the economic viability of restoration, notwithstanding that if feasible, a full restoration/rebuild would result in a modern facsimile of the historic building built to modern Building Regulation requirements. Likewise, the wider location that does not achieve the high values of a city centre location or one with high tourism numbers, and thus the economic value of the Site does not have the economic returns of such locations.

The starting point for determining the application is section 96(2) of the Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2023 which places a duty on the LPA in determining an application for listed building consent to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building to which the application relates, the setting of the building, and any features of special architectural or historic interest the building possesses. Section 314A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 places a similar duty for the determination of a planning application relating to a listed building. As required by the Planning Policy Wales and specifically Technical Advice Note 24 (TAN24), the purpose which is to provide guidance on how the planning system considers the historic environment as part of the decision making process.

3 CONDITION

The historic environment is recognised as being central to Wales's culture and character, and can contribute to the sense of place and identity. This is reinforced through Planning Policy Wales which builds on this, whereby Para 6.1.12 states **The demolition of any listed building should be considered as exceptional and require the strongest justification.** This is, in turn, supplemented by Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment. Paragraph 5.15 of TAN24 states; **an application for the demolition of a listed building should be made in exceptional circumstances and only as an option of last resort.**

Notwithstanding this, this Site is one that blights the local area (and has done so for 20+years) and it is one that no longer retains any resemblance of the C18 property that it once was. It is a ruinous structure, which has also become the focus of antisocial activity.

The timeline of events regarding Ty'n Yr Heol is as follows and highlights the attempts by the applicant since purchasing the Site that there have been various attempts to seek a resolution for the Site.

1. Purchased as an auction property in October 2013 in a similar state of dilapidation;
2. Early 2014 contacted Alwyn Jones Architect to discuss renovating and possibly extending to accommodate a boutique hotel and wedding venue;
3. 2014 – cleared site and carried out a full topographical survey;
4. Nov 2014 – finalise drawings with Alwyn Jones;
5. 2015 – Discuss designs with contractors and assess building condition;
6. 2015 – Discuss design ideas and potential enabling development with LPA;
7. Informed by LPA that the council had taken on responsibility for the Site prior to auction due to the building having been repossessed by mortgage providers/banks. Applicant was informed by officers that the council had implemented works make the Site safe which included the demolition of some parts of the building and/or

outbuildings to minimise health and safety issues whilst they were responsible/liable;.

8. 2016 – Darren Sparkes from Intrado Robbins consulting engineers carried out a full structural condition report;
9. 2017 – John Lock appointed as a planning consultant. Sent delisting application to CADW;
10. 2018 - de-listing not approved;
11. 2018 – AE Designs appointed to draft 2 new design schemes for the entire site;
12. 2019 – Intrado Robbins reviewed the development and updated the survey;
13. 2019 – non statutory pre-application submitted to LPA;
14. 2019 – contacted Planning Heritage Ltd to discuss delisting and project options;
15. 2019 – On advice of LPA, new structural survey carried out by Mann Williams (accredited conservation structural engineers); and
16. 2020 to 2022 project on hold.

Since 2019, the condition of the property has been regularly monitored following an initial survey by Mann Williams, Consulting Structural and Civil Engineers who specialise in historic buildings. They had been involved in projects including Cardiff Castle and Plas Gunter Mansion. The conclusion of Mann Williams report showed the building is in a serious state of disrepair and degrading quickly. It is unsafe to enter the structure due to the poor conditions of the walls, bearings to steel beams and the loss of ground floor structures including decayed suspended floors and partially collapsed barrel vaults.

The report advised that in light of the health and safety issues and the likely cost involved in repairing the standing structures, a realistic view of the cost benefits in relation to historic fabric was considered. This was further supported by the assessment produced by the firm of specialist surveyors, Synergy in which the cost of a full restoration of the Georgian house would require an investment in the region of £6million+ to rebuild the property. A figure of this level makes the rebuilding of what would be a replica Georgian house beyond economic viability.

The parlous and dangerous state of the property raises difficult and complicated health and safety concerns making it unsafe to enter to carry out work/repairs. The poor condition of the standing walls, the loss of floor structures and collapse of the barrel vaulted basements has created an unstable situation, which is exacerbated by a lack of longterm weather protection.

The assessment of the standing structure has highlighted the clear and obvious dangers associated with this property, not least that what is now standing no longer reflects the historic home shown in photographs from the late C19. The unsafe condition of the property has prohibited the installation of appropriate safety measures including propping and scaffold.

Taking all of the above into account, not least that TAN24 advises consent for demolition should not be given simply because redevelopment is economically more attractive than the repair and re-use of a historic building, the applicant has sought to keep the Site safe and free of vegetation in the hope that a realistic scheme could be achieved as has been demonstrated through previously submitted reports and discussions held with the Council with regard the conversion for a wedding venue with guest rooms etc.

Today, the condition of the building has deteriorated to the extent that the standing walls no longer represent the original building and the reason for its listing. However, the applicant has sought continually to find a solution for the Site and to keep it secure and regularly cleared of vegetation. The Site as noted, remains unsafe and the considerable H&S requirements do not allow workers to access the building. The standing walls are unstable, which in turn prohibits the interior to be scaffolded to stabilise and support the walls and propped from the outside. Likewise, it has not been feasible to stabilise and secure the remains with internal lateral supports. The dangerous condition and working environment prohibits the clearing of debris from the building, which collapsed as a result of the fire.

With regard to test one as set out in paragraph 5.15, there has been ongoing maintenance of the Site but as stated, the standing remains of the ruinous house are unsafe to work on or repair/maintain and as such maintenance

has been confined to the Site in general. However, the cost of restoration would be in the region of £6m+ to rebuild, then maintenance of such a Site is unviable, notwithstanding that the structures are parlous, dangerous and unstable and so maintaining them would serve little purpose.

In addition, the unsafe and unstable condition of the standing remains of the former house are such that works to arrest to decline of the Site are not feasible. The Council are aware that the Site was bought in a parlous condition and that the Authority undertook some initial works to make the Site safer prior to auction. Since purchasing the Site, applicant has carried out site clearance and ground works as the standing remains do not realistically allow for the erection of protective scaffolds. The reports written by both MW and Synergy Construction and Property Consultants note the parlous condition and associated dangers for working on this site. This has had a direct impact on the ability to repair or maintain the standing remains, which bear no recognisable features of the former house.

4 USE and MARKETING

TAN24 requires that owners of dilapidated buildings make effort to keep the building in use or to secure a new use, including the offer of the unrestricted freehold of the building for sale at a fair market price that reflects its condition and situation.

In assessing the implications of the above points, the dilapidated condition of the building has meant that for over 10 years any use has not been feasible. In this respect, the issue of keeping the building in use as stated in paragraph 5.15 is not relevant. However, the applicant has made efforts to secure a new use through the planning process, whilst trying to keep the Site secure. It has not been the intention to sell the Site and so marketing exercises were not carried out. If the Site were to be marketed, it would be in the condition that it is seen, taking into account the on-site constraints of the listed building(s), TPO's and proximity to the surrounding properties as well as the cost of restoration, which would be prohibitive.

However, since the Council have stated the Site must be marketed as stipulated by paragraph 5.15, initial enquiries were made in the regard. One response from Jonathan Morgan, Managing Director of the Peter Morgan Group based upon the available information including the reinstatement cost assessment prepared by Synergy Construction and Property Consultants LLP, was that **having reviewed the report in full, it is clear that the total reinstatement cost of £6,720,765 (including professional fees and VAT) renders the project financially unfeasible. The level of expenditure required to rebuild the property to its former specification far exceeds any realistic market value that could be achieved upon completion.**

Given the magnitude of the costs, along with the complexities of reinstating a Grade II listed building and the limited potential for recovery of investment, it would not be viable or marketable in its current state. The only feasible option for any prospective purchaser would be a full reinstatement, and the financial implications of doing so would deter any reasonable buyer.

Therefore, I must confirm that the property cannot be considered commercially viable for reinstatement or resale under current market conditions, (email of 15 October 2025).

A further assessment of the potential marketing of the Site was considered by Eloise Kench, Associate Partner at Carter Jonas, who confirmed that **there is little in the way of structure to survey. The building appears to have been all but destroyed by weather and vegetation following the extensive fire and since environmental damage. The site is currently not safe to access... there would be a significant cost to rebuild the house which would essentially be starting from scratch with very little in the way that would be salvageable. This is likely to outweigh the value of the property to any investor unless they could radically develop the site.**

On that basis the value to rebuild is likely to far exceed the value of the property both historically and economically. The price paid in 2013 therefore may not be achievable.

5 ALTERNATIVE PROPOSALS

TAN24 requires that where alternative proposals for a site are to be considered, including replacement buildings, then the merits of the design of such schemes including whether the loss of any listed building would be outweighed by the benefits for the community that may arise. This report demonstrates that the proposals to redevelop the Site which include the demolition of the listed building are ones which meet the criteria set out in TAN24 para 5.15.

Turning to this Site, it is one that offers no heritage value in its current form or condition. It is unsafe and blights the local area. Its redevelopment would provide public benefit through the provision of housing but equally, it would reverse the longterm blight that has occurred through the lack of use and decay on site.

It is acknowledged that demolition is the last resort. The Council are aware of the exceptional circumstances of this Site, and in light of extensive and robust assessments, it has been demonstrated that the standing structures are beyond economic repair and restoration. The applicant has not deliberately neglected the Site nor has it been the intention not to restore it. The applicant has made effort to prevent vandalism and further loss of fabric, notwithstanding the real concerns for health and safety and engage with the Council since 2015 with regard to development options for the Site.

The proposed scheme proposes a sensitive redevelopment of the Site that is of an appropriate architectural style, which complements the local context, scale, mass and materials of the surrounding urban landscape and one which will complement the current development pattern and enhance the wider location. It will provide substantial benefits to the wider community, achieving a beneficial reuse, removing the blight to the wider community and provide housing, a use that this Site has historically been associated with.

PLATES



1. The standing remains of the main house 2024



2. Aerial photograph showing the Site and its wider location



3. The front façade of the main house