

Heritage Impact Assessment for: Internal Re-ordering of 5 Denbury Mews, Usk

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Table of Contents	
1.0 Introduction	Page 3
1.1 Description of the special architectural or historic importance of the building	Page 3
1.2 The special architectural or historic interest of the building and its significance with reference to the part of the building affected by the works (Cadw's Conservation Principle 2 – Understanding the significance of the asset)	Page 5
2.0 Design principles and concepts	
2.1 Description of the proposed works	Page 7
2.2 Design principles and concepts	Page 7
2.3 The objective the works are intended to achieve and why they are desirable or necessary	Page 7
2.4 An assessment of the impact of the works on the special architectural or historic interest of the building and its significance, including a description of any potential benefits or harm.	Page 7
2.5 A summary of the options considered and the reasons why the proposals are preferred	Page 9
2.6 Access Issues	Page 9
2.7 The Impact Upon the Public Realm (Cadw's Conservation Principle 3 – The Historic environment is a shared resource and Cadw's Conservation Principle 4 – Everyone will be able to participate in sustaining the historic environment)	Page 9
2.8 Records (Cadw's Conservation Principle 5 – Decisions about change must be reasonable, transparent and consistent)	Page 9
3.0 Conclusion	Page 9
Appendix 1- Draft I Schedule of Works	Page 10

1.0 Introduction

This Building was one of Ty Brith's service buildings and is situated on Denbury Mews, which is a modern cul-de-sac within the historic core of the town of Usk.

Little of the Roman settlement remains although this site is immediately north of the north wall of the legionary fortress and may either have formed part of the earthworks surrounding the Fort or have been occupied by the camp followers that surrounded Roman Forts in this period.

The town was completely re planned as a new settlement by [Richard de Clare, 2nd Earl of Pembroke](#), who established the secular boundaries within the town between 1154 and 1170. This settlement was completely burned by [Owain Glyndŵr](#) and rebuilt shortly afterwards.

The plot currently occupied by Garden House and its former auxiliary buildings may have either formed one of these plots, or part of the outer precinct of the Priory which lay immediately south of the church, with the alignment of Four Ash Street suggesting the latter.

The oldest parts of Garden House probably date to the 16th century according to the Cadw Listing Description and may have formed part of the Priory, although the building was substantially altered in the 18th century and extended in the 19th century.

This application relates to the coach house. Whilst a smaller building is shown on the 1847 Tithe map this is difficult to reconcile with the current building, and it is unclear as to whether this was extended and remodelled in the late 19th century or actually rebuilt.

An aerial photograph dating from around 1930 shows this building clearly. At this point in time it was a much simpler building of an agricultural appearance. Although the overall form and massing have been retained, neither the dormer windows, nor the gable above the door appear to be historic. Interestingly the lower roof appears to be a half, rather than full hip on this photo. This photo also shows that the southwestern elevation of the cart shed was completely open at that time. Whilst there is definitely a column approximately along the line of the current wall between the lounge and sitting room, the photo does not show if this formed a continuous wall or not.

Prior to 1990 Ty Brith was a doctors' surgery, and it is known that the house was converted into its current configuration around this time. It is probable that The Coach House was also converted then when much of the evidence that would enable more accurate dating to be provided was either concealed or lost.

Whilst the Cadw description describes the residential conversion as "sensitive" the current form is dramatically different from that of the 19th and early 20th century.

The current proposal is for minor re-modelling of the interior, to better fit it to 21st century needs.

This document should be read in conjunction with all drawings, reports and any other statements issued under this application.

1.1 Description of the special architectural or historic importance of the building

Full Report for Listed Buildings




Summary Description of a Listed Buildings

Reference Number	Building Number	Grade	Status	Date of Designation	Date of Amendment
82762		II	Designated	30/04/2004	30/04/2004

Name of Property	Address
Former coach-house to Ty Brith (5 Denbury Mews) and attached wall	

Location

Unitary Authority	Community	Town	Locality	Easting	Northing
Monmouthshire	Usk	Usk	Usk	337824	200902

Street Side	Location
E	The rear wall forms the end part of the S range of Twyn Square.

Description

Broad Class	Period
Transport	

History

C19. Former coach-house to Ty Brith.

Exterior

Former ancillary range converted to dwelling, matching in style the stable/kennel range now Ty Celyn. Rear elevation facing Twyn Square is of rubble stone with brick dressings; inner facing elevation is rendered and painted; hipped slate roof incorporating dormers. L-shaped, single-storey and attic. Cross-framed windows with metal-framed lattice glazing to front; 9-pane sashes to rear. Gabled doorway with deep stone hoodmould and small apex light above above.

Interior

Residential accommodation.

Reason for designation

Retained on list following sympathetic conversion as an integral part of the Ty Brith complex and for its contribution to the streetscape of Twyn Square. Group value with other listed buildings in Priory Street and Twyn Square.

Cadw : Full Report for Listed Buildings

[Records 1 of 1

1.2 The Special Architectural or Historic Interest of the Building and its Significance with Reference to the Part of the Building Affected by the Works (Cadw's Conservation Principle 2 – Understanding the significance of the asset)

Ty Brith House comprises three discrete elements, which have slightly different heritage values. The oldest part of the house almost certainly dates to the 17th century and may possibly form part of the medieval priory.

This was substantially remodelled and extended during the late 18th or early 19th century and seems to have assumed its current form prior to the surveying of the 1846 tithe map. This would appear to be confirmed by the upper windows which are of the very delicate form typical of the Regency period. The current kitchen area and bedroom above date from this phase, and are the most important elements of the building, and have a high heritage value.

The 1847 tithe map appears to show a substantial range of outbuildings, which may have dated back to the medieval period, although it is unclear as to whether the current coach house was one of these.

This building was either rebuilt or significantly extended by the addition of single-storey range between 1847 and 1930, and then further altered by the provision of a new roof structure with prominent dormers and redesigned fenestration, at least to the south, between 1930 and 2004.

Whilst historic walls would be expected between the hall and lounge, and the hall and kitchen, significant portions of the former appear to have been removed, whilst the latter appears far too insubstantial to be historic.

Although the wall between the lounge and sitting room may be historic, such walls may best be described as uncommon in such cart sheds, and this wall is more probably a later insertion.

The ground floor interior layout should therefore be considered to be of a low historic value.

The upper floor layout is almost certainly of mid to late 20th century construction and is of negligible historic value.

Whilst the building is undoubtedly attractive and makes a positive aesthetic contribution to the streetscape, this appearance does not reflect either its historic form or the rugged utilitarian nature of a traditional agricultural building and thus can only be considered to be of low historical value.

1.2.1 Summary of Heritage Values

Value	Attributes
Evidential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of roman, medieval and post medieval settlement forms, especially that of a very unusual planned medieval settlement, and its surrounding land ownership • Evidence of possible medieval priory building which was altered in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries • Evidence of 19th century specialist building (i.e. a carriage shed) • Evidence of post medieval agricultural practices.
Historic Value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Plot may have connections with Richard De Clare's establishment of Usk by 1170 • The building may have been part of one of only three monastic settlements for women in Wales.
Aesthetic Value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Principle elevation makes a significant positive contribution to the historic streetscape of Usk • There is a visual inter relationship between this building and the rest of the Ty Brith complex
Communal Value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The contribution that this building visually makes to the streetscape • Shared heritage and identification with nationally and locally important events which have shaped modern Welsh identity

2.0 Design Principles and Concepts

2.1 Description of the Proposed Works

It is proposed to slightly re-model the interior by removing the direct passage between the sitting room and hallway, providing a new double door between the sitting room and lounge, creating a new utility room off the hallway, altering the location of the kitchen door, and extending the en-suite at the expense of making bedroom two slightly smaller

2.2 Design Principles and Concepts

The key principle which has driven all the proposed alteration is to create a much more contemporary interior whilst still respecting the historic fabric.

Most of the alterations will only impact upon structure which was inserted in the late 20th century with the only historic fabric affected being the removal of the wall between the lounge and sitting room.

The exterior will remain unaltered.

2.3 The Objective for The Works Are Intended to Achieve and Why They Are Desirable or Necessary

Family life in the 21st century is very different from that of the preceding centuries. In addition, the character of the town of Usk is changing from that of a small market town serving the needs of a local community to that of a prosperous commuter settlement with many residents coming from top socio-economic groupings.

All buildings have a cycle of maintenance with minor maintenance being required over 5-, 10- and 20-year cycles, but with more major interventions required at either 50 or 100 year periods. Failure to provide this, or providing inappropriate interventions, inevitably results in the long term deterioration, of the core historic fabric.

This building was probably constructed in the mid to late 19th century as an agricultural building and converted into residential use between 1930 and 2004.

Unfortunately, the 20th century rebuild has aged quickly, and now appears tired and dated.

It is therefore felt that this building, as it currently stands, will fail to meet the aspirations of the social economic group who would have sufficient economic resources to enable it to be well maintained for the next few decades, and that the overall long term sustainability of the building will be best achieved by altering this building, as proposed, to enable it to appeal to such a group.

Failure to do so is likely to result in a cycle in which the building becomes progressively less desirable, and consequently maintenance decreases and the building slowly decays until it becomes a "building at risk"

2.4 An Assessment of the Impact of the Works on the Special Architectural or Historic Interest of the Building and its Significance, Including a Description of any Potential Benefits or Harm.

None of these proposed alterations would directly impact upon the principle historic value of the building which is its contribution to the streetscape as the principle elevation would remain unaltered. However,

these alterations would make the building more desirable to a more affluent owner who may be considered more likely to maintain the principle elevation to a higher standard.



Moving the doorway between the kitchen and hallway and the provision of a new glazed panel adjacent to the door and the enlargement of the en-suite to bedroom 1 and the equivalent reduction in size of bedroom 2 will only impact late 20th century fabric and therefore have a neutral impact upon the significance of the building

The remodelling of the passage between the hallway and the insertion of a clear glazed panel adjacent to the doorway will more closely replicate the historic form of this space and enable the historic form of the building to be more clearly understood, whilst making the modern intervention more discernible. This should be seen as a minor benefit to the significance of the building

The creation of the new opening between the lounge and sitting room will enable these two currently separate spaces to be appreciated as a single space which probably replicates the original form of this building, although the thickness of the wall indicates that it is of 19th rather than 20th century origin. This does mean that historic fabric will be lost. Consequently, this should be seen as having a minor adverse to neutral impact upon the significance of the building

2.5 A Summary of the Options Considered and the Reasons Why the Proposals are Preferred

Work Proposed	Options	Benefits	Disadvantages	Selected option
Internal alterations	Leave as is	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum intervention • Lowest cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has dated appearance • Lacks impact internally 	
	Reconfigure as proposed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a more contemporary interior • Alterations to lounge enable the historic form to be more easily appreciated • Enables light throughout the lower floor • Provides facility which increases the long-term sustainability of the building • Creates a small but useful utility room 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The loss of the direct link between the sitting room and hall makes escape in case of fire more hazardous • Loss of some historic fabric 	X

2.6 Access Issues

These alterations impact the interior arrangement only and will have a neutral impact upon the accessibility of the building.

2.7 The Impact Upon the Public (Cadw's Conservation Principle 3 – The Historic environment is a shared resource and Cadw's Conservation Principle 4 – Everyone will be able to participate in sustaining the historic environment)

This proposal will enable the continued use of this building and give the building a new and well-maintained appearance, which will enhance the overall public perception of the building.

2.8 Records (Cadw's Conservation Principle 5 – Decisions about change must be reasonable, transparent and consistent)

The Planning process is a democratic process which is open to public scrutiny and comment at all stages. Additionally, this application will become a public document which is preserved. It is considered that all the above alterations represent elements of this scheme which were needed to facilitate this participation

3.0 Conclusion

The proposed works will have a neutral impact upon the principal historic value of this building and will have a minor negative impact upon the historic structure. They will however make the building much more fit for purpose in the 21st century by providing additional facilities which are considered so highly desirable as to be essential to retain occupiers who would have sufficient resources to enable the building to be adequately maintained in the future. As such they should be considered to be in the best interest of the building and consent should be given for them.

Appendix 1- Draft I Schedule of Works

1. Blocking the existing entrance to the kitchen
2. Creating a new opening in the wall between the kitchen and hallway for a new door and clear glazed panel
3. Creating a new opening in the wall between the lounge and hallway for a new clear glazed panel
4. Demolishing the existing stud wall creating a corridor between the hallway and the sitting room
5. Creating a new stud wall to form a utility room
6. The addition of units and plumbing to create a utility room
7. The demolition of part of the wall between the sitting room and lounge
8. The blocking up of the current door into the sitting room
9. The demolition of the current wall between bedroom two and the en-suite to bedroom one
10. The creation of a new stud wall to form a larger en-suite
11. Refitting the en-suite