

# Nos.1-3 Castle Buildings, Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant MEMORANDUM

R22/069/001  
MHS

## NOTES ON CURRENT PROPOSALS

14<sup>th</sup> May 2022

Richard K Morriss *MA(Hons) MSocSc*

Nos.1-3 Castle Buildings is a row of two and a half storey houses built of coursed slate rubble under a recently restored slate roof on rising ground on the western edge of the village of Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant; the terrace was listed Grade II in 2003. It requires renovation and one section, No.3, restoration and proposals have been developed to achieve this.

The property has clearly been divided into three separate dwellings for many years but has a more complex historical development. Close examination of the main south elevation clearly shows that the front of Nos.1 and 2 (to the right and centre) predate the front of No.3 to the left.

Furthermore the height of the heads of the openings of Nos.1 and 2 show that the original design was of three bays with a central doorway with a lower segmental arched head (now leading into No.2) flanked by windows on either side with higher heads of the same pattern. The window to the right was then converted into the doorway into No.1 – accounting for the otherwise odd height of its head. There is also disturbance in the lower section of the jambs of the opening.

There are clear vertical breaks between the front of No.2 and No.3 at the left-hand end; No.3 was thus clearly added to the gable end of the original house – and as it is quite narrow this also accounts for it projecting further to the north from the original building in order to provide adequate accommodation.

The design and layout of No.1 is also odd but also probably the result of the conversion of the original single house into two and presumably dating from the same time that No.3 was added.

The blank front section of the east gable and its projection forward from the present cramped side entrance to No.1 relates to a demolished range built at an angle to the south-east shown on the title map. The existence of that long demolished range partly accounts for the location of the odd side entrance and associated windows to No.1.

It is suggested therefore that there was an original fairly large house, now represented by Nos.1 and 2, probably, built in the late-18<sup>th</sup> or early-19<sup>th</sup> century. Shortly afterwards it was converted into three dwellings – the original house becoming two and a third added on the western side. The outline phasing and current separate dwellings are shown in Fig.1 below.

## **Nos.1-3 Castle Buildings, Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant MEMORANDUM**

The interior had to be radically re-ordered to accommodate the new arrangements, with inserted stud partitions added, but ultimately each property became a separate dwelling of similar size and each had front and back (or in the case of no.1, side) doorways and their own staircases.

The evidence of the tithe map suggests that the sub-division had occurred by that time, indicating an early-19<sup>th</sup> century date. The surviving fixtures and fittings of note within the building – which are limited – fit that period, especially the three separate staircases. The general character of the external changes is very similar to the original build, probably indicating the site was still owned by the original owners.

The Wynnstay Estate owned them at the time of the tithe apportionment and the original single house was probably built by them. The map, incidentally, also shows that the lane past the property did not then exist in its present form so that there could have been no yard wall or gateway alongside separating it from the grounds of the houses. The present wall of brick faced in rubblestone is of no great antiquity.

Apart from the creation of the adjacent lane, there is no evidence of any changes to that situation until the very recent past when a doorway was inserted – at first-floor level only – between Nos.1 and 2; it is not clear if this occurred before or after the building was listed in 2003 and seems to have been done without any consent.

The lack of any other openings and any other attempts to create a more logical circulation pattern for a single larger dwelling shows that this was not a serious attempt to combine the two into a logical single dwelling. No.3 was still separate and effecting unused and in a semi-derelict condition.

The present proposals are for the much needed restoration of the houses, which include the replacement of the poor condition sashes with new ones designed to be virtually the same in appearance. These will have virtually no impact on the visual aesthetic of significance of the listed building, other than an overall improvement. The intended restoration of No.3 will be of considerable benefit to the group and to the conservation area in general.

The proposals are also to reinforce the fact that these became three separate dwellings in the early-19<sup>th</sup> century and remained so until the very recent past. This will be achieved by the simple act of blocking the modern inserted doorway linking the first floors of Nos.1 and 2, reversing the unauthorised works.

No other significant changes are needed because each of the dwellings was already quite independent in terms of their layouts, front and rear doorways, stairs and other facilities. Internal changes are mainly decorative or restorative – all to the clear benefit of the character and significance of the listed building.

## Nos.1-3 Castle Buildings, Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant MEMORANDUM

The proposals are considered to result in restoring the three dwellings as the separate entities that they have been for around two centuries as well as, through their restoration, ensuring the long-term future of a designated heritage asset.

In addition, the careful and proportionate external repairs and refurbishment are considered to enhance the settings of any adjacent heritage assets and of the conservation area. The proposals are thus considered to be well-designed and proportionate and meet the requirements of Planning Policy Wales and sections 66 and 72 of the 1990 Planning Act.

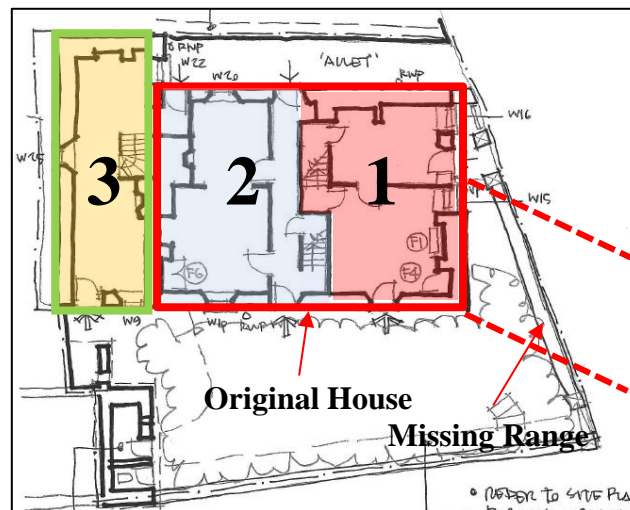
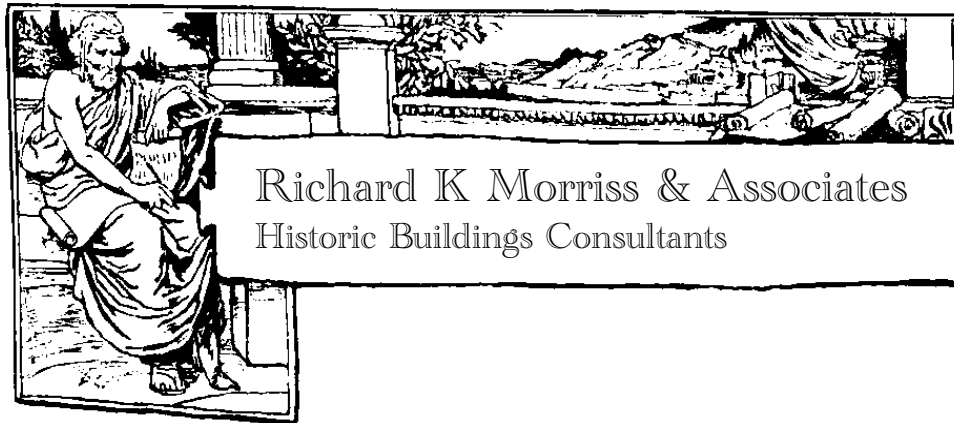


Fig.1: Outline ground-floor plan of the development of the buildings, showing the outline of the original house and the three separate dwellings established by the early-19<sup>th</sup> century.

# Nos.1-3 Castle Buildings, Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant MEMORANDUM



## *The Consultancy*

*Richard K Morriss founded this Consultancy in 1995 after previously working for English Heritage and the Ironbridge Institute of the University of Birmingham and spending eight years as Assistant Director of the Hereford Archaeology Unit. Although Shropshire-based the Consultancy works throughout the UK on a wide variety of historic buildings for clients that include the National Trust, the Landmark Trust, English Heritage, the Crown Estates, owners, architects, local authorities, planning consultants and developers. It specialises in the archaeological and architectural analysis of historic buildings of all periods and planning advice related to them. It also undertakes heritage impact assessments and broader area appraisals and Conservation Management Plans.*

*Richard Morriss is a former Member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists and of the Association of Diocesan and Cathedral Archaeologists, currently archaeological advisor to four cathedrals and author of many academic papers and of 20 books, mainly on architecture and archaeology, including *The Archaeology of Buildings* (Tempus 2000), *The Archaeology of Railways* (Tempus 1999); *Roads: Archaeology & Architecture* (Tempus 2006) and ten in the *Buildings of* series: Bath, Chester, Ludlow, Salisbury, Shrewsbury, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwick, Winchester, Windsor, Worcester (Sutton 1993-1994). The latest work is an Historic England funded monograph on the Houses of Hereford (Oxbow 2018).*

*He was a member of the project teams responsible for the restoration of Astley Castle, Warwickshire, winner of the 2013 RIBA Stirling Prize; the restoration of the Old Market House, Shrewsbury, winner of a 2004 RIBA Conservation Award; and Llwyn Celyn, Monmouthshire, winner of the RICS Conservation Project of the Year 2019. He has also been involved in several projects that have won, or been short-listed for, other awards including those of the Georgian Group for Mostyn House, Denbigh; St. Helen's House, Derby; Radbourne Hall, Derbyshire and Cusgarne Manor, Cornwall.*



BROMLOW HOUSE  
BROMLOW  
SHROPSHIRE  
SY5 0EA  
rkmbromlowhouse@gmail.com