

Heritage Impact Assessment

Arvonja Bakery
14 Heol Maengwyn
Machynlleth

Rev A January 2024
NRV Architectural Design



Introduction

A planning application is being submitted for the demolition of the existing buildings and the construction of two dwellings and a storage facility (as existing) on the plot behind Arvonja Bakery. The site is situated just off Heol Maengwyn in the centre of Machynlleth, an historic market town in the Dyfi valley. The site lies within the conservation area and in proximity to the Wynnstay Hotel, a listed building, so conservation area consent is also required.

Objective

The dwellings will be made available as affordable rental properties. They have been designed to provide practical, comfortable accommodation whilst improving the aesthetic of the site. The location is excellent for tenants on a lower income and those wishing to live sustainably as facilities such as shops and schools are all within walking distance, reducing the need for vehicle transport. Public transport is readily available nearby and bike storage has been provided in the dwellings.

Historic Significance

The listing for the Wynnstay hotel is as follows:

Grade II listed former coaching inn, with a shallow iron-railed forecourt, dating from 1780; remodelled and enlarged in later C19 and extensive modern renovation. Originally the Unicorn Hotel and then the Wynnstay Herbert Arms and Unicorn Hotel following the closure in late C19 of the original Wynnstay in Heol Penrallt. First listed on 19 November 1990.

Building Description: 3-storey, and attic 2+3 bay front, the combination of two separate buildings; the right hand part is stepped forward. Whitewashed brick, half hipped slate roof and dentilled eaves. 4 gabled dormers (broader to centre) with small pane casement windows and applied timberwork. Mostly horned sash windows to 1st and 2nd floors; 2-light casement over porch. Ground floor has square headed carriage entry to left; to right, lean-to canopy links splayed bay with French windows. Beyond is the Doric porch with modern piers and glazed sides; formerly with iron balustraded parapet. The datestone is to the top right hand corner of the building and flanking a now disused rainwater head.

Rubble rear, part slate hung; vertical joint visible near the centre corresponding to the point where the front steps forward. Gables to 3 bays and a variety of window types. Complicated ranges adjoin to the rear; modern connecting block to gabled cross range with 2 windows overlooking drive over deep splayed bay (ca 1900). Slightly taller range behind with cross gable containing high semicircular arch; bellcote to roof.

Interior retains segmental arched openings to ground floor hall area with panelled soffits and deep impost bands; dado rail. Some chamfered beams to low ceiling. Simple dog-leg staircase.

Included for group value with other listed items in town centre.

Although in proximity to the Wynnstay Hotel the only the rear of the site (west elevation) is visible from the yard of the listed building. This elevation currently consists of a rubble slate wall with no openings and the proposal has been designed to keep this intact, instead introducing conservation type roof lights for daylight and ventilation to the rear of the dwellings. The development will therefore have no impact on the historic asset.

Following a site meeting with the Built Heritage officer and a senior Archeologist from CPAT, advice was given that the site itself lies within a medieval burgage plot and there is a chance that various archeological features of interest may be present below ground. It will therefore be necessary to employ an archeologist to carry out a watching brief when the site is being cleared and foundations or service trenches are being dug.

The current dilapidated stone buildings have been severely altered over time in order to create the bakehouse - large sections of the front wall have been removed and steel beams added so not much of the original frontage remains. It is suspected that these may have been a row of cottages dating from the late C18th or early C19th; an archeological survey is to be carried out when the internal cladding has been removed which will provide more details and provide a record for the future.

There is a brick extension to the front of the buildings which is a more recent addition and is of no historic significance. All buildings, including the original ones have been re-roofed with asbestos sheeting, which is leaking badly.

The building at the end, facing the Wynnstay car park is the old store for the bakery. This will be rebuilt virtually the same in appearance, apart from the improvement of having a slate roof plus a window and roof lights to allow natural light into the building. The existing use as a storage facility will be retained.



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Proposed changes

As the original buildings are in such poor condition it is proposed to demolish everything apart from the rear wall (structural condition permitting). The new dwellings will be constructed on virtually the same footprint using masonry construction and faced with stone salvaged from the existing buildings. Natural slate roofing will be used in place of the asbestos sheets. The brick structures will be removed and the front of the cottages will have a more traditional appearance.

The built heritage officer has been consulted and the design of the buildings amended from the original proposal (submitted for a pre-application enquiry) in accordance with the advice given.

Impact Assessment

Any removal of a historic building has the potential to affect the evidential qualities of the area, but in this case the building is in such poor condition that it will invariably collapse if it is left for much longer. To mitigate this impact an archeological building recording will be undertaken prior to any demolition work and a watching brief will be carried out when groundwork takes place.

The aesthetic qualities of the site will be greatly improved, from a semi derelict building with a rubble strewn yard into a pair of traditional looking dwellings which will be in keeping with the design requirements of the conservation area. Overall the project will have a positive impact on the surroundings.

The proposed replacement of the dilapidated and unsightly ex-bakery with a pair of compact but comfortable dwellings for affordable rental will be an overall benefit for both the surrounding area and new occupants. There will be no change of use for the end building but it will no longer be in a dangerous condition and its appearance will be improved.