

Huw Lewis AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Tai, Adfywio a Threftadaeth
Minister for Housing, Regeneration and Heritage



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-403
Ein cyf/Our ref HL/05946/12

William Powell AM
Chair Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

19 July 2012

Dear William

Thank you for your letter asking for my comments on the petition led by Sian Ifan, asking that the Welsh Government be instructed to purchase Plas Cwrt yn Dre, Newtown.

The Welsh Government has a duty to conserve and present the sites in its care and with limited resources at our disposal we need to be satisfied that certain criteria are met in assessing whether to take on any additional sites. Generally, sites should be of outstanding importance at a national level, and many sites which do not meet that criterion are managed by others than Cadw, for example private owners or public bodies such as local authorities. We also need to be sure that we really are the option of last resort and the site cannot be properly sustained by others.

In this instance there does not seem to be any compelling reason to take the property into state care. It seems to have been suitably managed in its previous use as a meeting house for the Society of Friends, and although currently vacant, it is being actively marketed for private sale. The building is listed – it was upgraded to II* earlier this year - which introduces a statutory requirement to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building, or its setting, or any features of special architectural and historic interest that it may have. The local planning authority is able to protect the character of the property through the requirement to obtain listed building consent for any works of alteration or extension which would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest. I am satisfied that listing provides the most appropriate framework for the protection of this building, which is not currently on the Buildings at Risk Register maintained by Powys County Council.

In re-evaluating the grading earlier this year, my officials in Cadw were able to examine the structure of the building and some of the material relating to its history, an exercise which has led to a much better understanding of its development and the extent of change

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associated with the move from Dolgellau to Newtown. There is no direct evidence for the date of the original building, and no references to an association with Owain Glyndwr before the early nineteenth century, and although the strength of an assumed association undoubtedly contributed to its survival, the building was heavily modified when it was re-erected in Newtown – relatively little of the form and fabric of the original building survived in what was in effect an imaginative reconstruction.

I hope that this reply is of help.



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