

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/06391/12

William Powell AM
Chair Petition's committee

6 November 2012

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter of 22 October about the petition asking that the Welsh Government be instructed to purchase Plas Cwrt yn Dre, Newtown.

Buildings are listed in three grades which reflect their relative importance at the national level. Grade II listed buildings represent those that are of special interest which warrant every effort being made to preserve them, grade II* listed buildings are important buildings of more than special interest and grade I listed buildings are exceptional. Grade I and II* listed buildings represent the top 8% of all listed buildings in Wales.

In reconsidering the grading of Plas Cwrt yn Dre my officials in Cadw concluded that there was little evidence to support its traditional association with Owain Glyndwr and relatively little fabric survived from the original late medieval building. However, the history of the building from the perspective of its preservation was considered to be sufficiently interesting to justify an enhanced grading from II to II*.

The claim that the building was the site of a Parliament called by Owain Glyndwr first emerged in the early nineteenth century. That claim was a significant factor in the building's subsequent history, including its preservation in situ, and its subsequent dismantling and imaginative reconstruction in Newtown in 1885. Although relatively little pre-nineteenth century fabric survives, it is clear that the reconstructed building in Newtown was largely based on the historic building in Dolgellau, taking what was then deemed to be its most interesting features as the basis for the reconstruction. It gives us a rare link not only to a timber-framing tradition in Dolgellau, but also to ideas about historical architecture at the end of the nineteenth century. On these grounds it was upgraded to II* to draw attention to this remarkable history, and to ensure that any proposals to alter it are informed by a proper understanding of its interest.

As regards the workshops being held by my officials in Cadw to inform the Heritage Bill, three horizon scanning workshops were held in February and March 2012 to consider the

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

English Enquiry Line 0845 010 3300
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0845 010 4400
Correspondence.huw.lewis@wales.gsi.gov.uk

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drivers that might shape Wales in the future. A report on the outcome of the workshops has been published and a copy is attached for information.

Four specialist workshops were then held in May and June 2012, covering the built historic environment; archaeology; historic assets from the owner's perspective and historic parks, gardens and landscapes. The workshops focused on the present arrangements and what we want our protection framework to achieve in the future. These workshops were followed by the Treftadaeth conference, held in July 2012 and attended by nearly 150 people. This conference included a series of workshops which looked at the future of our protection framework. A full report on the outcomes of the workshops and conference is in preparation.

Finally, Cadw, in partnership with CyMAL and the Wales Council for Voluntary Action, is currently holding three road-shows/drop-in events across Wales to engage further with Third Sector organisations and local communities, seeking their views about the future of the historic environment in Wales and our framework for protection.

I hope that my reply is of help.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Huw Lewis'.

Huw Lewis AC / AM

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