

From: Coward, Matthew (CADW)

Sent: 15 August 2011 11:41

FORMER ROATH STEAM LAUNDRY

Thank you for contacting Cadw about the possible listing of the former Roath Steam Laundry as a building of special architectural or historic interest.

After careful consideration of all the evidence received, and a site inspection, Cadw does not believe that the building reaches the standard required for listing. I enclose a copy of the assessment report which provides further details of the basis for that view.

I can well understand how you will be disappointed with this decision. However, I can assure you that Cadw has looked closely at all the evidence presented in support of listing but, as the statutory criteria are not met in the case of this building, there is no basis on which to list.

I am sorry that my reply could not be more positive.

Regards
Matthew

ASSESSMENT FOR LISTING AS A BUILDING OF SPECIAL ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC INTEREST

FORMER ROATH STEAM LAUNDRY

Background

Roath was surveyed to identify historic buildings of the standard suitable for listing in 2001 and the former Steam Laundry was assessed but not recommended for listing at that time. The building has recently been the subject of a campaign to save the premises and campaigners have submitted information to support for the case for listing, including an article from the Western Mail of 28 September 1898 which records the layout and operation of the laundry along with an account of its official opening. This information provides a detailed description of the building which was clearly a very well equipped and modern laundry on a large scale and with a number of staff and different operations.

Assessment

Cadw inspected the building on Monday 8 August 2011.

The Laundry is a prominent brick and sandstone building on the north side of the junction of Marlborough Road and Blenheim Road in Roath. It was opened in September 1898 and built on land donated by Lord Tredegar. It was designed by the architects Habershon and Fawckner who played a large part in the construction of later C19th Cardiff.

It has most recently been used as a warehouse shop for carpet and pine furniture businesses along with a number of other different operations. This is reflected in the general layout and condition of the building internally, there is very little in the way of historic character to the internal spaces – they are large open rooms with only the glazed brick wall finishes and timber roof frames and lanterns visible - and nothing to indicate the former function and importance of this building.

Externally there have also been some alterations, most significantly the windows and main doors to the front elevation, which the Western Mail refers to as large teak doors, and which have been replaced with modern glazed doors. The stables/garage survive separately to the main buildings but these have also been altered internally. A pump which has been suggested to be a surviving laundry water pump is within the garage and is a hand petrol pump.

When a community has been the subject of a past assessment for listing, it is important that any subsequent requests draw attention to any new evidence that may not have been previously available to Cadw, or otherwise explain why the building's special interest may have been overlooked. The former laundry was

looked at during the 2001 resurvey of Roath and its function and importance would have been understood at the time. Equally, given the prominence of WG Habershon in Cardiff it is probable that his influence here was properly recognised.

Notwithstanding this, the former laundry does not stand out as a key example of this particular building type which current circular guidance specifies for the assessment of listing buildings of the post-1840 date. There are 32 laundry buildings listed, mostly estate buildings and of a different character and value. The former Roath laundry does have some merit in it being a public laundry, but the loss of almost all internal features relating to its use and key external character is significant and it is now difficult to either interpret the building or recognise it as a particularly good example of its type.

At the same time it does have some historic association with the Tredegar estate, but this is not unusual or remarkable in terms of national history. It also has historic connection with a notable architect but given the proliferation of buildings that were designed by Habershon or have some connection to his firm, of which over 50 have already been listed, this connection is not sufficiently remarkable or unusual to further the case for listing.

In conclusion, this building is a prominent historic building and does have some local importance within the community of Roath but the loss of external detailing and internal fittings and function means that it does not meet the criteria for listing at the national level.

Cadw
August 2011