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Comisiwn Brenhinol
Henebion Cymru
Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales

31 October 2024

FAO Sarah Hill

RE: P/2024/1407. Wrexham Carnegie Library, Queen's Square, Wrexham. *Listed building consent for internal and external alterations.*

Thank you for consulting us on the plans for Wrexham Carnegie Library, at Queen's Square, application number P/2024/1407. The remit of the Royal Commission permits us to comment only on the historical significance and context of a monument or structure and on the adequacy or otherwise of the record.

Funded from the Carnegie Trust the library at Queen's Square, Wrexham, was built with a dual purpose as a lecture hall in 1906–07 to the Grand Edwardian / Edwardian Baroque designs of Vernon Hodge. Built of Flemish bond brickwork with ashlar lower storey and dressings and a graded slate roof, the library is one of hundreds – estimated at 660 – built across the United Kingdom in association with nineteenth century industrialist Andrew Carnegie's philanthropic endeavours. Carnegie's libraries, the first having opened in 1883, ensured public access to libraries improved significantly in the UK, with 60% of the population having access to a public library by 1915 compared with just 23% in 1883.

It is estimated that thirty-five libraries in Wales were built from Carnegie's grants, which were given from 1902 to 1913. Varied in style, the architects of the Carnegie libraries were diverse, and each one opted for their preferred architectural idiom. Playing a crucial role in the cultural development of Wrexham in the twentieth century, the Carnegie Library at Queen's Square proved a success for architect, Vernon Hodge, who was also responsible for the design of other public buildings in Wales such as Pontypridd's YMCA.

The proposal seeks internal and external alterations to the Grade II Listed library, and repurposed the former library into a 'multi-purpose creative hub'. Due to the nature of the works to be carried out under these proposals, we would recommend as a condition of consent a **Level 3 photographic survey** as detailed in section 5 (p.26) of Historic England's Understanding Historic Buildings (2016). Digital copies of the resulting survey photographs should then be deposited with the National Monuments Record of Wales in Aberystwyth.

Yn gywir / Yours sincerely

Meilyr Powel

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