Council for British Archaeology

BUILDINGS ARCHAEOLOGY CASEWORK TEAM



A National Amenity Society

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19 March 2025

Pickhill Farm, Pickhill, Cross Lanes, Wrexham, LL13 0UL. Application No. P/2025/0242.

Dear Sharon,

Thank you for notifying the Council for British Archaeology (CBA) of this application.

Summary

The CBA **object** to this application as it would cause substantial harm to the Grade II listed farmhouse. We do not consider that this level of harm has been adequately justified and recommend that the farmhouse is restored and retained.

Significance

Pickhill Farmhouse is a large H-plan sixteenth century dwelling, constructed of timber framing with brick infill. There is a rubble masonry nineteenth-century two-storey addition with a cellar to the north, and traditional and modern agricultural outbuildings. Internally, the historic character of the building is clearly legible, although in need of refurbishment.

The form, fabric, impressive scale, and traditional character of the farmhouse have historic and evidential value, which are recognised in its Grade II listing. This indicates that the building is of national importance. Its location and position within a traditional farmstead also hold evidence about the use and development of land management and agricultural practices within the area, which contribute to its evidential value.

Comments

The current proposals are for the total demolition of the listed building and its replacement with a modern dwelling.

Under para 6.1.12 of Planning Policy Wales, 'The demolition of any listed building should be considered as exceptional and require the strongest justification'. While this building is clearly in need of maintenance and repairs, we do not consider that 'exceptional circumstances' exist in this case, and strong justification has not been provided.

The submitted structural assessment appears to have undertaken only a visual assessment of parts of the building. This is insufficient to demonstrate that the entire building is beyond repair, or that required repairs would be so extensive that the building's significance would not be largely retained. The primary area of structural instability appears to be within the nineteenth century rubble extension, possibly relating to water ingress within the cellar; the CBA would not object to the reconstruction or removal of this area, if it is demonstrably beyond repair.

The historic timber framed core of the building primary appears to be suffering degradation from long-term neglect and potential water ingress. We recommend that the roof structure and drainage around the building be repaired as a priority, to allow the building to dry out and to limit further damage. There is no clear evidence to demonstrate that conservation-led repairs could not successfully retain the historic character and much of the existing fabric of the building.

We do not consider that the submitted structural or heritage assessments demonstrate an understanding of the building's significance, or the effects of the proposals on this significance. As a sixteenth century building retaining much of its historic form and fabric, and with legible later phases of development, the farmhouse has high historic and evidential value, which would be lost as a result of this proposal. Our appreciation of its historic character could be enhanced through the conservation-led repair and refurbishment of the building which would allow its sustainable use and full appreciation of its aesthetic qualities, but the need for repairs does not reduce its historic value as the submitted heritage statement suggests.

The total loss of the listed building would cause substantial and permanent harm to the building, the farmstead and to the historic character of the area. We consider that the current proposals do not meet the following requirements of Planning Policy Wales:

> 6.1.10 There should be a general presumption in favour of the preservation or enhancement of a listed building … For any development proposal affecting a listed building or its setting, the primary material consideration is the building, its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
>
> 6.1.11 For listed buildings, the aim should be to find the best way to protect and enhance their special qualities, retaining them in sustainable use.
>
> 6.1.13 Applicants for listed building consent must be able to justify their proposals, show why the alteration or demolition of a listed building is

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desirable or necessary and consider the impact of any change upon its significance. This must be included in a heritage impact statement, which will be proportionate both to the significance of the building and to the degree of change proposed.

Recommendation

We recommend that this application is **withdrawn** and that an alternative solution is found for the retention and repair of the historic building, using a conservation-led methodology and informed by a suitably qualified historic buildings specialist.

If this application is not withdrawn, we recommend that it be **refused**, as it will cause a high and unjustified level of harm to the building's historic character and significance.

I trust these comments are useful to you; please keep the CBA informed of any developments with this case.

Kind Regards,

Dr Alison Edwards
Listed Buildings Caseworker

The Council for British Archaeology (CBA) was established in 1944 and is the national amenity society concerned with protection of the archaeological interest in heritage assets. Local planning authorities have a duty to notify the CBA of applications for listed building consent involving partial or total demolition, under the procedures set out in **Regulation 9 (Notification to the Amenity Societies and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, 2024) of the Historic Environment (Wales) Act.**

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