



Heritage Impact Assessment

Extension to dwelling and conversion of
outbuildings

Moss Villa, Chapel Lane, Bronington, Whitchurch, SY13
3HR

March 2024



BERRYS

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CLIENT

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PROJECT

Two storey extension to dwelling, conversion of outbuildings to carport and home office and upgrade of thermal insulation to principal dwelling

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Beech House
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Shrewsbury Business Park
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2. Methodology

- 2.1 The methodology in this report will be based upon Cadw's *Heritage Impact Assessment in Wales* and *Setting of Historic Assets in Wales* which sets out a staged approach on identifying historic assets, analysing the setting, evaluating the potential impact, and considering changes or mitigation strategies to the development to improve any potential impact.
- 2.2 The report has primarily been produced through desktop research, using relevant secondary sources including:
- National Library of Scotland (online resource)
 - National Historic Assets of Wales (Cof Cymru)
 - National Monuments Record of Wales
 - Historic Environment Service - Cadw
 - Wrexham County Record Office
- 2.3 A site visit was conducted on 1st March 2023 to assess the significance of the designated heritage asset and to take photos. Conditions were dry with intermittent sunshine.
- 2.4 The assessment is primarily a desk-based study which has utilised secondary sources derived from a variety of published sources. The assumption has been made that this data is reasonably accurate. The records held by the HER and historic maps are not an infinite record of all heritage assets, but a record of the discovery of historic features.

3. Identifying Heritage Assets

3.1 Planning Policy Wales defines the historic environment as *“being made up of individual historic features which are collectively known as historic assets, which can include:*

- *Listed buildings;*
- *Conservation areas;*
- *Historic assets of special local interest;*
- *Historic parks and gardens;*
- *Townscapes;*
- *Historic Landscapes;*
- *World Heritage Sites; and*
- *Archaeological remains (including scheduled monuments).”*

3.2 The application site (hereafter referred to as ‘the Site’) is the grade II listed Moss Villa, Cadw ref no. 85475.

Name	Listing	Description
Moss Villa	II	A 1½-storey cottage of brick with slate roof on overhanging eaves, and brick ridge stack. Above the windows is a sawtooth band in each elevation. Openings have segmental heads, and windows are casements with wood mullions. The gable end entrance has a central boarded door and a 2-light window above. The L side wall has a 2-light window and small window beneath the eaves. The R side has two 3-light windows, of which the R-hand has been renewed. In the rear gable end is a boarded door on the L side and 2-light windows to the R and above.



Figure 1: Moss Villa Northwest and Southwest Elevations

4. Planning Policy

4.1 Planning decisions should be taken in accordance with local plan policy unless material considerations indicate otherwise, Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 refers. This statement is written in the context of the following legislative, planning policy and guidance:

- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservations Areas) Act 1990
- Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016
- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Planning Policy Wales 2024 (PPW)
- Technical Advice Note (TAN) 24: *The Historic Environment (2017)*
- Historic Environment Records in Wales: *Compilation and Use (2017)*
- Managing Lists of Historic Assets of Special Local Interest in Wales (2017)
- Setting of Historic Assets in Wales (2017)

4.2 Section 6 of PPW covers the Historic Environment under Distinctive and Natural Places, setting out objectives to realise a prosperous Wales by valuing the quality of its landscapes and historic environment.

4.3 In 6.1.6 of PPW specific objectives are set out, those which are most relevant to this development are:

- conserve archaeological remains, both for their own sake and for their role in education, leisure and the economy
- safeguard the character of historic buildings and manage change so that their special architectural and historic interest is preserved

4.4 Section 66(1) of the Act (1990) states that when:

"...considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses."

- 4.5 Decision-makers should give “*considerable importance and weight*” to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings when carrying out the balancing exercise.¹
- 4.6 Whilst the statutory duty requires that special regard should be paid to the desirability of not harming the setting of a Listed Building, that cannot mean that any harm, however minor, would necessarily require planning permission to be refused as clarified in the Court of Appeal.²
- 4.7 The following policies from the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (1996 – 2011) are also relevant:
- EC9 – Listed Buildings of Special, Architectural or Historic Interest
 - EC11 – Archaeology
 - H3 – Conversion of Buildings Outside Settlement Limits
 - H5 – Housing in the Countryside

¹ Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Limited v East Northants DC, English Heritage, National Trust & SSCLG [2014] EWCA Civ.137.

² Palmer v Herefordshire Council & Anor [2016] EWCA Civ 1061 (04 November 2016)

5. Historic Development & Appraisal

- 5.1 The Site is located in the easternmost edge of Wrexham County, in Wales, roughly 1 mile south of the village of Bronington. Despite being in Wales, the close large settlement is Whitchurch, Shropshire, being 4 miles to the northeast.
- 5.2 Bronington is a small village located in Wrexham County Borough, Wales. The area appears to have been the subject of human activity for millennia, particularly on the nearby Fenn, Whixhall & Bettisfield Mosses. Archaeological finds include five “bog bodies” discovered in the late 1800s and date to the Iron Age or Romano-British Period.
- 5.3 The history of the village of Bronington dates back to the Roman period, as it is believed that the Roman road known as Watling Street ran through the village.
- 5.4 During the Middle Ages, Bronington was part of the Lordship of Bromfield and Yale, and it was owned by the Earls of Chester. In the 13th century, a motte and bailey castle was built in the village, but it was destroyed during the Welsh Wars of the 14th century.
- 5.5 In the 18th and 19th centuries, Bronington became a centre for the flax and linen industry, with several mills and factories operating in the village. The village also had a railway station, which opened in 1866 and closed in 1964.
- 5.6 During World War II, Bronington was the site of a Royal Air Force airfield, which was used for training purposes. The airfield closed in 1957 and is now a farm.
- 5.7 Today, Bronington is a quiet village with a population of around 500 people. It has a village hall, a primary school, a pub, and several small businesses.
- 5.8 The Site is located in a rural area south of Bronington, bordering onto the Fenn, Whixhall & Bettisfield Mosses nature reserve.
- 5.9 Tithe records (Figure 2) dating to 1839 confirm the presence of the existing building on the site, with the land described as “*Cottage Garden*”. The landowner was Sir John Hanmer Baronet. Sir John Hanmer was a politician

who served as Member of Parliament for Shrewsbury between 1832 and 1837. He was also High Sheriff of the historic county of Flintshire, where the current Site was located. The tenant, John Clay, was an agricultural labourer, who occupied the house in the 1840s, with his wife Margaret.

- 5.10 Map regression (Figures 10-15) confirms that the Site and its setting has seen little change in the intervening years. The proximity to the nearby Fenn, Whixhall & Bettisfield Mosses has prevented any large-scale development both in terms of availability of viable land and in terms of protection of the natural environment, beginning with the creation of the nature reserve in 1953.

6. Establishing Significance

- 6.1 Cadw's "Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment" defines significance as:

"The sum of the cultural and natural heritage values of a place..."

- 6.2 The Site is of historic and architectural interest. The Site is comprised of red-brick 2no. bedroom house with slate roof tiles and a single, central brick-built chimney stack. Windows are casement and timber framed, 4 in total, though it is noted that they do not appear to be original. There is one small window located beneath the eave on the eastern elevation which is unique amongst the windows on the Site.



Figure 2: The northeast elevation of the Site. This Site features the architecturally interesting small, square window, as well as a portion of the dog toothed corbelling detail.

- 6.3 This western elevation features a decorative stone detailing, which appears to show the crest of the Hanmer baronet (who's estate included the Site, as per 5.9). The crest is described in Burke's 1844 Encyclopaedia of Heraldry as:

“On a chapeau azure, turned up ermine, a lion sejant, guardant, argent.” The Hanmer motto; *“Gardez l'honneur”* (Keep the Honour) is detailed below. A further architectural detail on the external of the Site is the dog toothed corbelling detail which wraps around each elevation. Within the curtilage of the Site is a cast iron water pump.



Figure 3: The Hanmer crest and motto. The Site formed a part of the Hanmer estate and served as a dwelling to estate workers.

- 6.3 Internally the Site features two historically interesting fireplaces, one on either floor. The fireplace found on the ground floor is constructed from brick and features a large open hearth. On the second floor, the fireplace is much more minimal and narrower, with the brick construction being coated in black paint or bitumen. This fireplace features a decorative wrought iron grate with floral motif.
- 6.4 The Site provides a good example of a well-preserved cottage within the Hanmer estate, a style which is characteristic of the area. The retention of the Hanmer crest on the external of the Site provides a tangible relationship

with the past and adds further historic significance. The Site is therefore of historic and architectural interest.



Figure 4: Historic fireplace surround in bedroom one.

- 6.5 The Site includes within its curtilage a number of outbuildings which are of varying levels of interest. Map regression (Figures 1 – 6) show a structure on this Site going back to at least 1900. There is some historic and architectural interest retained with this outbuilding, most notably some parts of the external brick and the timber stable door, indicating its former use as a cow pen. There are two further structures, located to the east and south of the main dwelling. To the east lies a timber Dutch barn structure and to the south a smaller outbuilding. These structures do not feature on historic maps and do not carry any historic or architectural interest, being of later construction and material. There is no evidence of any archaeological interest in the Site.



Figure 5: The most historically significant of the outbuildings. Map regression shows a structure in this area.

6.5 Whilst the Site is of historic and architectural significance, it should be noted that there are elements which have harmed this significance already. On the external of the main dwelling, there are several untidy/unsympathetic elements which detract from the Site's significance. On the north-east elevation of the Site a historic brick has been removed to accommodate a pair of pipes going into the building. This is both unsightly and has resulted in the removal of historic fabric, though the removed brick has still been retained on the Site. Further to this, there are exposed drainage pipes encircling the building at the ground level. These are divergent from the guttering and downpipes found on the property which are black and cast iron. In contrast, this ground level drainpipes appear to be modern and constructed from a mixture of plastic and copper. Whilst the windows within the Site are historic, they are not considered to be originals. Moreover, the right window on the Site's south-west elevation has been replaced.



Figure 6: Main living space within the Site. The significant fireplace is visible, as is the newly installed skirting boards.

7. Heritage Impact Assessment

7.1 Paragraph 6.1.13 of the Planning Policy Wales 2024 directs that:

“Applicants for listed building consent must be able to justify their proposals, show why the alteration or demolition of a listed building is 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.”

7.2 The proposal seeks to extend and convert the former cow-pen and storage shed. The outbuilding, previously used to house a dairy cow for milking, is now redundant. Substantial cracking to the rear now threatens the buildings structural integrity. The proposal seeks to repurpose this building into a study/utility room, ensuring that the understanding of the outbuilding as ancillary to the main building remains.



Figure 6: Former cow-pen, with breezeblock lean-to proposed for removal and adjoining brick store

- 7.3 The breezeblock lean-to will be removed and a new window opening will be added to the gable end to introduce natural light. The room will be insulated with a breathable cork drylining, to aid heat retention and make the room a usable space.
- 7.4 The redbrick store with corrugated metal infill, will be rebuilt to accommodate a covered carport. An oak timber frame will be used to retain the character of the Site, whilst the rear wall will be rebuilt to maintain privacy from Chapel Lane. This will be rebuilt in redbrick, as per the Conservation Officers' pre-application feedback. The whole roof will be recovered with Welsh slate, to match the farmhouse. This will ensure the building is retained for the future with a sustainable use.
- 7.5 Renovation work to the house is also proposed to bring the building up to a comfortable modern standard of living accommodation. The building is currently vacant, and further works are required to ensure the buildings future use.
- 7.6 Paragraph 6.1.11 of the PPW 2024 stipulates that retention of a building's original use should be considered the first option, and promotes "the need for flexibility where new uses have to be considered in order to secure the building's survival".
- 7.7 What was once an agricultural worker's dwelling, is now considered to be a cramped house which does not support modern family life. The small kitchen and lack of insulation have contributed to the building remaining vacant. To remedy this, a sensitively designed, two-storey extension is proposed to provide a kitchen space large enough to support a small family home. The former kitchen will be converted to a w.c. and utility room, whilst existing windows will be increased in size to accommodate the extension's ground

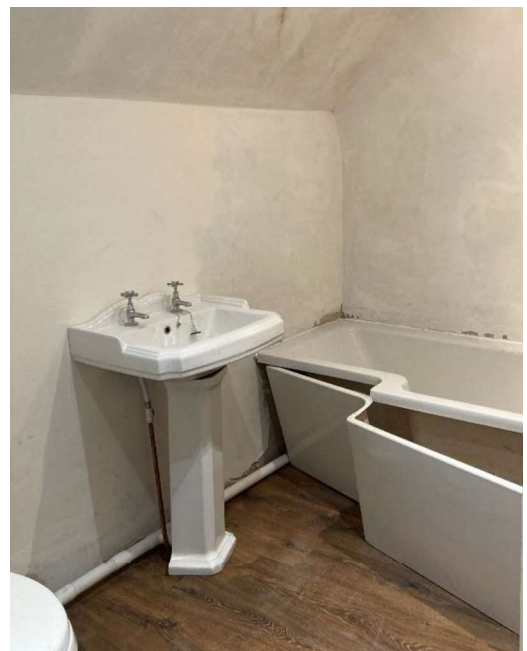


Figure 7: Existing first floor bathroom

and first-floor doorways, limiting the impact on the historic fabric and maintaining legibility of the historic layout.

- 7.8 The first floor of the extension will provide a third bedroom, with ensuite, creating a master bedroom. This will enable the building to be utilised as a family house that meets the needs of modern family life. Reconfiguration of first floor 'corridor' and bathroom partition wall will also provide a better balance of space between the bathroom and bedroom 2.
- 7.11 The building will be internally lined with lime plaster insulation. Beyond the two fireplaces, no historic features remain in the interior. Subsequently, the introduction of internal insulation will not result in the loss of any historic fabric or features and will allow the building to maintain a more stable temperature.



Figure 8: Ground floor fireplace. Proposed location of log burner to utilise existing flue.

- 7.9 The gabled extension will be of red brick with a slate roof to match existing materials. The windows will also benefit from matching round-headed windows and door opening which will ensure the extension remains cohesive

with the building's traditional design. The scale of the extension will also remain subservient to the main dwelling. The extension's ridge height will step down from the main building, maintaining understanding as a later addition, whilst the width has been determined by the position of the existing window openings.

- 7.10 Following feedback from the LPA's Conservation officer, the projection of the extension has been reduced by 450mm. Following, this the Planning Officer requested a further reduction (currently proposed) in order that it respects the size of the original dwelling and its character as a small agricultural labourer's dwelling.
- 7.11 Finally, the surrounding garden will be landscaped to raise the ground level surrounding the building. This will reduce the step up into the farmhouse and will also bury the UVPC pipework surrounding the house which has been left exposed and is unsightly. The mid-C20 timber dutch-style barn will be removed to allow the former agricultural workers dwelling uninterrupted views over the fields to the east.



Figure 9: Mid-C20 Dutch-style timber barn, proposed for removal.

8. Conclusion

- 7.1 Planning Policy Wales helps to clarify the importance of assessing the impact of a proposal on the significance of a historic asset. It explains that:

“Any decisions made through the planning system must fully consider the impact on the historic environment and on the significance and heritage values of individual historic assets and their contribution to the character of place.”

- 7.2 The Site is a grade II listed building with architectural and historic interest as an estate worker’s dwelling relating to the Hanmer baronet estate. The proposal seeks to ensure the site’s retention as a dwelling, with upgrades to ensure the building meets the needs of modern family life.
- 7.3 The conversion of the former cow-pen will ensure the building retains a viable use, enabling its future maintenance and retention. The removal of the breezeblock lean to will improve the legibility of the original building and the installation of the carport will bring back into life the currently underutilised buildings which are in poor condition, whilst retaining the understanding of the site’s former layout.
- 7.3 The extension and works proposed to the existing house, will ensure the currently vacant building is habitable in the C21 as a family dwelling and mitigates as much loss of historic fabric as possible with a sensitive extension. The extension will remain subservient whilst providing the internal space needed. Meanwhile, the addition of internal insulation will ensure the historic core remains a comfortable, usable space.
- 7.4 The proposal will secure the buildings future use with minimum required intervention whilst enhancing its appreciation and significance through the upgrading of the outbuildings and loss of the agricultural building which now detracts from the historic asset.
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Client: [REDACTED]
Berrys Reference: SA47063

8. Appendix 1 – Map Regression

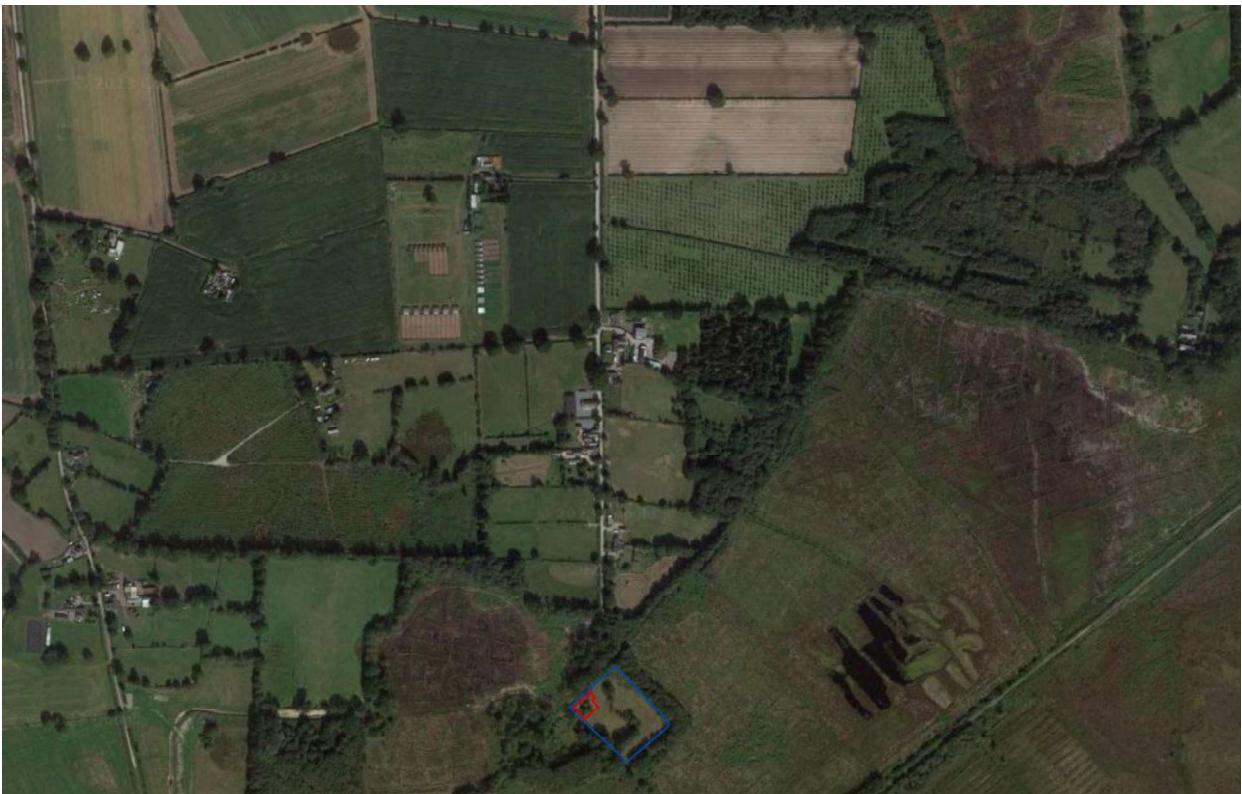


Figure 10 – The Site within its local context.

Client: [REDACTED]
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Figure 11 - Tithe map, 1839

Client: [REDACTED]
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Figure 12 - OS Map, 1878

Client: [REDACTED]
Berrys Reference: SA47063



Figure 13 - OS Map, 1900

Client: [REDACTED]
Berrys Reference: SA47063



Figure 14 - OS Map, 1929

Client: [REDACTED]
Berrys Reference: SA47063



Figure 15 - OS Map, 1954