**Llangau**
**Access Road to Cyrchynan Ucha**
**Llanarmon D C**
**LL20 7LL**

**Proposed Ancillary Artist's Studio**

# DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

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**Proposed Ancillary Studio Building**
**Llangau, Access Road to Cyrchynan Ucha, Llanarmon D C, LL20 7LL**

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## 1. Introduction

This Design & Access Statement accompanies an application for Full Planning Permission for the erection of a new ancillary artist's studio building within the curtilage of Llangau, Llanarmon Dyffryn Ceiriog LL20 7 LL . Llangau is a Grade II listed cottage.

A **concurrent application** seeks Planning & Listed Building Consent (and associated permissions where required) for conservation-led repair and alteration works to the listed cottage. This Design & Access Statement addresses **the studio proposal only**, while acknowledging its relationship to the listed building and its setting.

The purpose of this statement is to explain the design rationale, siting, scale, appearance and access arrangements for the studio, and to demonstrate how the proposal responds to site context, heritage considerations, pre-application advice and relevant planning policy.

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## 2. Site and Context

Llangau is a small rural cottage located within the Ceiriog Valley, accessed via a narrow rural lane and steep access track, set within an open upland landscape. The site reflects a traditional rural pattern of a modest dwelling historically associated with agricultural use.

The curtilage includes:

- the listed cottage (principal building);
- the remains of an attached agricultural barn, now surviving as a stone ruin;
- areas of previously disturbed ground close to the access lane, currently used for parking and access.

Historic mapping confirms the long-established relationship between the cottage and ancillary structures. The barn ruin remains an important element in understanding the historic development of the site. In addition to figs 1-7 below, for more information on the setting see the separate **Heritage Impact Statement** and **Preliminary Environmental Assessment.**

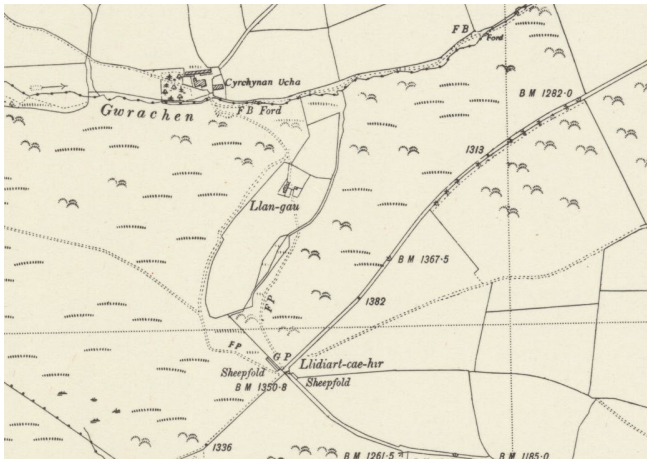



Fig 1 Denbighshire OS map 1954

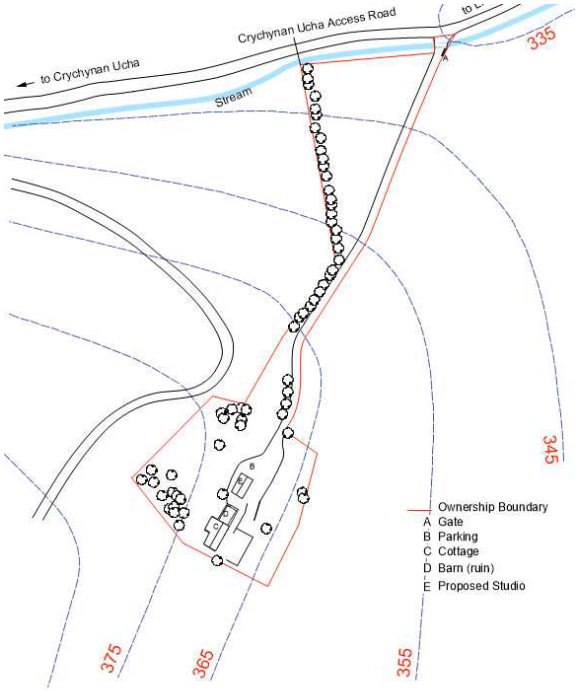



Fig 2 Location Plan



Fig 3 Views of Llangau from the road to Llanrhaeadr to East- this is the only publicly accessible route from which the site is visible



Fig 4 View of the cottage and parking area -the proposed site for Studio - from the access track (north)



Fig 5 View of the cottage and parking area beyond -the proposed site for studio barn - from the southern boundary



Fig 6 View of the cottage from the lower garden area to the east



Fig 7 View of the back of the cottage (west)

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## 3. The Brief and Design Objectives

The rooms in the existing cottage are small relative to modern standards  The brief is to provide a small, ancillary studio/workspace to support the use of the existing dwelling, without extending the listed building.

The key design objectives are:

- to maintain the **primacy and legibility of the listed cottage;**
- to preserve the **setting of the listed building**, including the barn ruin;
- to ensure the studio reads clearly as an **outbuilding**;
- to minimise visual, landscape and ecological impact;
- to locate development on **previously disturbed land**.

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## 4. Design Evolution and Siting Rationale

A range of locations and forms were considered during early design work and through pre-application discussion. These included extension of the cottage and rebuilding on the footprint of the former barn. These options were discounted due to:

- greater impact on historic fabric;
- loss of the barn ruin and its evidential value;

- increased effect on the setting of the listed building.

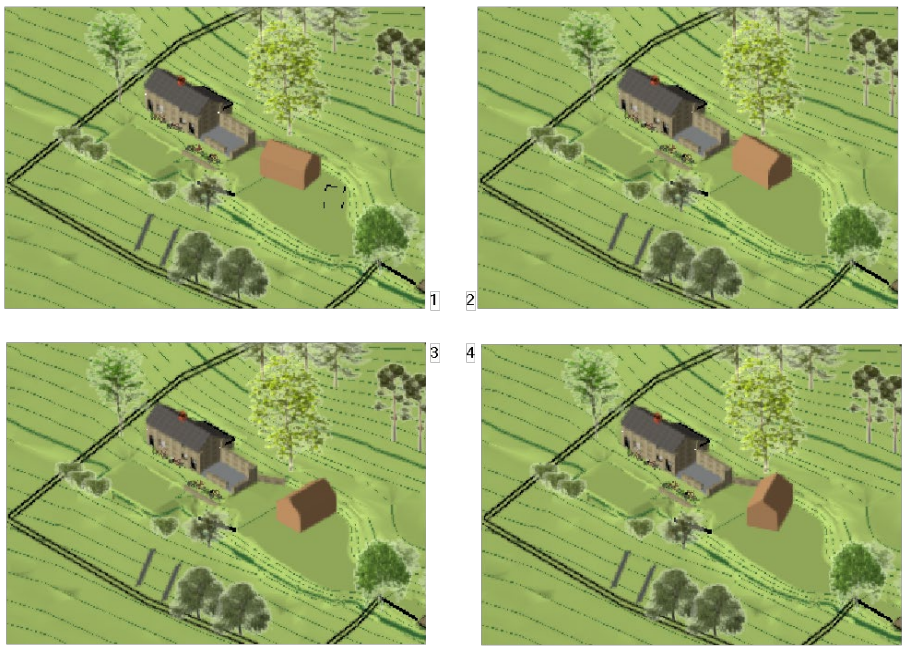



Fig 8 massing studies submitted in seeking pre-application advice of the studio barn in different positions relative to the cottage. Option 2, following the same geometry as the cottage, was the favoured location in pre-application response from Wrexham BC.

The chosen location for the studio:

- lies on previously disturbed ground near the access lane;
- avoids encroachment into open pasture;
- is physically and visually separated from the barn ruin, sited **11m** from the cottage;
- is in geometrical alignment with the cottage but is set back from it by approximately **0.7m** - as far back as the landform will allow;
- allows the cottage to remain the dominant element in views.

This location responds to pre-application advice and minimises landscape, heritage and ecological impacts.

The proposal responds to the established upland farmstead typology of the area, where a modest dwelling is historically accompanied by attached or nearby agricultural buildings. Local examples, including Cyrchnan Isa (below), demonstrate this pattern of a principal house with larger working barns in proximity.



Fig 9 local farmstead, Cyrchnan Isa

The studio adopts this typology at a greatly reduced scale**.** Following pre-application advice the massing of the proposal has been reconsidered to be clearly subordinate to the cottage. The proposed barn is smaller in volume than the original barn (that was attached to the cottage). Its exterior footprint is 60% of that of the listed cottage and substantially smaller than agricultural barns typical of the area. This ensures the building reads clearly as an ancillary outbuilding**,** maintaining the primacy of the cottage.




Fig 10 Diagram of comparative footprints showing indicative footprints of the listed cottage at Llangau, the proposed ancillary studio. (Areas derived from drawings).

# 5. The Proposal

## 5.1 Use

The studio is an ancillary building associated with the existing dwelling, providing workspace for art-making.

## 5.2 Form and Layout

The building adopts a simple rectangular plan with a simple double pitched roof with a geometry identical to that of the cottage and reflecting an agricultural outbuilding typology. There are no wings, projections or rooflights.

Internally there is a composting toilet, sink and woodburning stove (Llangau is off grid so heating and servicing is rudimentary).

Externally features will be included on the new building (on the protected rear, west elevation) suitable for roosting bats and nesting birds as an environmental enhancement to the site.

The site is not connected to any mains utilities and the proposal includes an array of solar panels on the lower ground of the garden to the east of the listed building, plus a small back-up generator behind the new studio, to serve both the proposed studio and the existing cottage. Grey water and surface water, with relatively small volumes, will connect to the existing drain and soakaway.

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# 6. Scale, Massing and Hierarchy

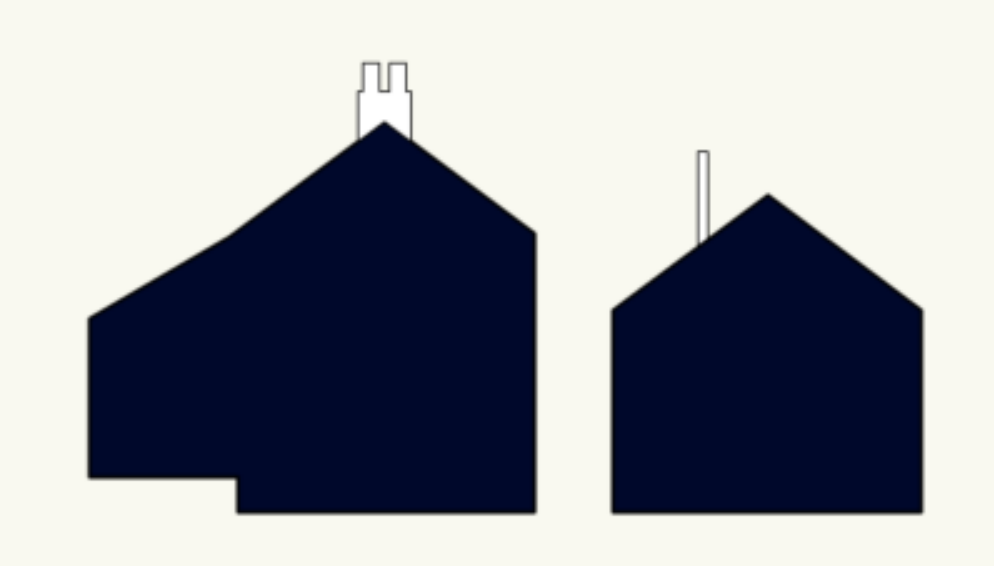
Scale and massing have been carefully controlled to ensure the studio remains clearly subordinate to the listed cottage, despite its small scale and size.

The studio has:

- an internal floor area approximately **one third** of the cottage;
- an overall volume less than **half** of the cottage.
- a ridge height nearly **1m lower** than the cottage ridge;
- an eaves height just under **1m lower** than the cottage eaves;
- a finished floor level approximately **0.3 m lower** than that of the cottage;

As was observed in the Local Authority's Pre-Application response, the small size of the cottage presents a challenge to the making a building subordinate. The studio also has to be fit for purpose. We have tried to resolve this tension to create a clear hierarchy between the principal listed building and the ancillary studio.

Comparative sections and massing diagrams below demonstrate this relationship. We have further reinforced the subordinate bature of the studio through the choice of proposed materials and colour.



COTTAGE PROPOSED STUDIO

Fig 11 Comparative sections through cottage and studio

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# 7. Appearance and Materials

The studio is designed to have a contemporary agricultural outbuilding aesthetic that accords with the character of the site and the setting of the listed cottage, while avoiding domestic detailing and/or pastiche.

The proposed palette is deliberately recessive and non-reflective, fitting with the rural context while remaining visually subordinate to the stone cottage. The material choice complements but does not compete with the cottage. The construction is sustainable, derived from natural materials with a low environmental impact and good durability.



Fig 12 view of proposal from the parking area (watercolour based on the 3D CAD drawings)



Fig 13 view of proposal from the lower garden areas on the southern boundary (watercolour based on the 3D CAD drawings)

Proposed materials are:

- **Walls:** fibre-cement corrugated rainscreen cladding in a dark blue-black, matte tone (Swisspearl Cemsix or similar);
- **Roof:** corrugated fibre-cement sheets in a matte dark blue-black tone (Swisspearl Cemsix or similar);
- **Windows and doors:** high-performance double glazed timber units (Rationel or similar) painted grey.

The proposed corrugated cladding echoes that on the south gable of the cottage as well as typical agricultural barns and outbuildings in the area. The proposed colour of the cladding is similar to the slate roof of the listed cottage.





Fig 14 example of dark corrugated fibre cement cladding used with dark window frames in a modest rural building (architect Konkret Studio)

Various colours and profiles were tested. Below are a selection of samples photographed in natural light with a sample of the cottage roof slate):





Fig 15, left, preferred Swisspearl Cemsix blue-black corrugated fibre cement, right, Swisspearl Cemsix natural corrugated fibre cement (note the horizontal banding is not a feature of the product but the result of stacking samples)





Fig 16 left, Swisspearl Cemsix blue-black corrugated fibre cement above Swisspearl Patina Inline P070 linear grooved integrally coloured fibre-cement; right, (L to R) Swisspearl Patina Original P 343 slightly sanded integrally coloured fibre cement, Equitone Linea LT40 linear grooved integrally coloured fibre cement, Swisspearl Terra Amber 754 fibre cement with translucent pigmented top layer, Swisspearl Terra Amber 755 fibre cement with translucent pigmented top layer







Fig 17 left, Swisspearl Cemsix blue-black corrugated fibre cement above (L) Equitone Linea LT40 linear grooved integrally coloured fibre cement and (R) Swisspearl Patina Original P 343 slightly sanded integrally coloured fibre cement; middle, Swisspearl Cemsix blue-black corrugated fibre cement above Swisspearl Terra Amber 754 fibre cement with translucent pigmented top layer; right, Swisspearl Cemsix blue-black corrugated fibre cement above Swisspearl Terra Amber 755 fibre cement with translucent pigmented top layer

The blue-black profiled cladding felt to be the most fitting in the setting and next to the cottage. Whilst the natural earthy tones of the Terra cladding are appealing and the darker colours echo the rusted steel cladding on the south elevation of the cottage, they may be too prominent in the landscape and detract from the primacy of the cottage in the setting.

**Computer Generated Visualisations**

Please  note the foliage and the rendering (especially of the cottage) are approximate



View from lower part of garden



View from across the valley



View from Llanrhaeadr Road

## 8. Access and Movement

No changes are proposed to the existing site access or parking arrangements. The studio will be accessed from the existing parking area.

The approach to the building will be step-free, subject to final detailing of external levels, and internal layout can be configured to provide inclusive access where required.

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## 9. Sustainability and Environmental Considerations

The proposal adopts a low-impact, fabric-first approach:

- lightweight construction with minimal foundations (screw anchors are proposed subject to ground investigations );
- A limecrete floor (eg the Sublime system by Ty Mawr, the renowned sustainable construction product company based in Brecon)
- high levels of insulation using natural materials (prefabricated straw-lime cassettes , wood fibre and mineral wool);
- low embodied carbon materials throughout, re-usable where possible;
- wood-burning stove for space heating;
- electricity generated from on-site photovoltaic panels (there is no mains grid connection to Llangau);
- cold water supply from spring fed on-site water tank+ electrical instantaneous hot water

No external lighting is proposed. This is in keeping with the off-grid spirit of the place and to retain sensitivity to wildlife.

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## 10. Ecology and Green Infrastructure

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been undertaken for the studio proposal and accompanies the application. The PEA confirms that the studio is located on previously disturbed ground and identifies no ecological constraints that would preclude development, subject to standard mitigation and enhancement measures that are being included in the proposals. The solar panels are located in the lower area of historically disturbed and used grassland in front of the cottage that will be unaffected by the proposal.

Ecological matters and biodiversity enhancements are addressed in detail in the PEA and the accompanying Green Infrastructure Statement and are not repeated here.

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# 11. Planning Policy Context

The proposal has been developed with regard to:

- Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12);
- TAN 12: Design;
- Cadw guidance on managing change to listed buildings;
- relevant Wrexham Local Development Plan policies relating to design quality, heritage and development within the setting of listed buildings.

The policy context informs the design approach. Of note: the development does not materially detrimentally affect countryside, landscape/townscape character, open space, or the quality of the natural environment, satisfying Policy PS2 (Broad Location of Development); the development makes a positive contribution to the appearance of the locality in terms of its scale, design, layout, materials and landscaping that accords with the character of the site, satisfying Policy GDP1; and, the development respects the setting and character of the listed buildings that it sits within the curtilage of, satisfying Policy EC9.

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# 12. Response to Pre-Application Advice

The table below sets out how the proposal responds directly to the issues raised during pre-application consultation.

| Pre-application matter raised | Officer concern | Applicant response | Where addressed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Impact on the significance of the listed building | Development should not harm the special architectural or historic interest of the listed building | The proposal has been informed by an assessment of the listed building's significance using the heritage values set out in TAN 24. No listed fabric is affected by the studio proposal. | Studio HIS §§2–5 |
| Impact on how the significance of the listed building is | New development within the curtilage must preserve the setting and the ability | The studio is deliberately modest in scale, lower in height and clearly subordinate to the cottage. Its siting and form preserve the | Studio HIS §§3–6 |

| Pre-application matter raised | Officer concern | Applicant response | Where addressed |
|---|---|---|---|
| appreciated and understood | to understand the listed building | historic hierarchy and do not affect how the significance of the listed building is appreciated and understood. | |
| Scale and massing of the proposed studio | Risk of the studio competing with the listed cottage | The studio footprint is approximately 58% of the cottage footprint, with a lower ridge, lower eaves and a lower ground level. Comparative section and footprint diagrams demonstrate clear subordination. | DAS §§4, 6; Figs 10,11 |
| Relationship to former barn | Loss of legibility of historic farmstead pattern | The barn ruin is retained. The studio is sited away from the ruin so that the historic relationship between dwelling and agricultural structure remains legible. | Studio HIS §4 |
| Impact on the setting of the listed building | Setting contributes to significance | The proposal has been assessed in accordance with *Setting of Historic Assets in Wales*. Key spatial relationships and views are preserved. | Studio HIS §§3, 5 |
| Ecology and green infrastructure | Ecological impacts must be assessed at application stage | PEAs for the cottage and studio have been submitted. Mitigation and enhancements are identified and integrated. | PEA reports; DAS §10 |

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# 13. Conclusion

The proposed studio represents a modest, carefully sited ancillary building that balances functionality with subordination to the heritage asset and supports the continued use of Llangau while preserving the primacy, setting and significance of the listed cottage. Through controlled scale, restrained materials and a clear architectural hierarchy, the proposal responds positively to site context, pre-application advice and relevant planning policy.