FLINT ARCHITECTURE

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Penley Old Hall
Overton Road, Penley
Wrexham
LL13 0LU

Application for Listed Building Consent for the conversion of a downstairs living room to an accessible bedroom with new ensuite bathroom.



28 July 2026

PURPOSE + SCOPE

This Heritage Impact Statement accompanies the application for listed building consent. It assesses the effect of the proposed internal alterations, insulation and associated drainage works on the special architectural and historic interest of Old Hall, Penley. The assessment is proportionate to the limited scale of intervention and has been informed by the Cadw list description, the Royal Commission record, drawing PL.1 and the photographs included on that drawing.

OBJECTIVE + PROPOSED ALTERATIONS

The objective is to allow for the owners of the house to remain in their long-established home into their old age as their mobility reduces. An existing ground-floor living room would become a bedroom with accessible ensuite, avoiding dependence on the upper floor.

The proposal converts the existing living room into a bedroom with dressing/reading area and an accessible ensuite. The works comprise:

- New lightweight stud partitions forming an accessible ensuite, suitably sized to allow for wheelchair turning space of approximately 1.5m
- Installation of an accessible shower, WC and wash basin, including ew drainage connecting the sanitary fittings to the existing drainage system;
- The external walls are to receive internal wall insulation using breathable wood-fibre insulation and lime plaster
- Redecoration following completion of the works.

The existing windows, fireplace wall, closet, corridor, hall and adjoining orangery remain unaltered. No extension or change to the roof, fenestration or principal external elevations is proposed.

HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Designation and development

Old Hall Farmhouse was designated at Grade II on 16 November 1962 (Cadw reference 1696). Cadw describes a late-medieval house containing a two-bay open hall. It became storeyed and was extended in the seventeenth century, with the earlier house becoming a cross wing. Originally timber-framed, much of the building was rebuilt in brick around 1785. A rear wing was added in the nineteenth century and subsequently extended. Major restoration took place in 1992.

The building is listed for its definite architectural character, its legible sequence of additions and alterations from the late-medieval period to the nineteenth century, and its surviving interior detail. The Cadw entry identifies the lobby-entry plan, back-to-back fireplaces, panelled doors, ovolo-moulded cross beams, chamfered beams and joists, a reset dog-leg stair and evidence of decorative painting on original trusses.

The adjoining orangery/garden room was the subject of an earlier planning and listed building consent application in 2021 and remains unaltered by this proposal.

Significance of the affected room

The living room contributes to significance as part of the evolved domestic plan. Its visible beams, traditional proportions, fireplace and existing window openings contribute to its character. The room does not appear from the submitted information to contain the painted trusses or partition recorded within the historic cross wing. Its principal heritage value derives from its relationship with the wider plan, retained visible structure and joinery, and traditional domestic character.

ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

Partitions and ensuite

The ensuite is positioned discreetly at one end of the room and occupies a limited area. Its introduction will alter the present open plan locally, but the principal bedroom area remains generous and the fireplace wall and visible character of the main space remain legible. Lightweight construction causes less disturbance than masonry and allows the partitions to be treated as a reversible insertion.

Drainage and services

New water, waste and soil connections may cause local disturbance where services pass through floors or walls. They should follow the shortest practicable route to the existing system, using existing or previously altered service routes where possible. Penetrations through historic structural timbers are to be avoided and disturbed finishes or external surfaces carefully reinstated.

Internal insulation and finishes

Wood-fibre insulation and lime plaster are vapour-open materials compatible in principle with traditional solid-wall construction. This reduces the risks associated with impermeable dry-lining and improves comfort. Existing windows remain unchanged. Junctions at openings and joinery should retain visible historic features and avoid unnecessary loss of fabric. Redecoration is low-impact and reversible.

External appearance and setting

There is no alteration to the building's external form, roof or fenestration. Subject to discreet drainage routing and careful reinstatement, the proposal will have no material effect on the external appearance or setting of the listed building.

Mitigation

- Retain the fireplace, windows, visible historic beams, closet and principal joinery;
- Scribe new work around significant fabric and do not cut or chase historic timbers;
- Minimise permanent fixings into historic fabric;
- Use a vapour-open wood-fibre and lime-plaster insulation build-up;
- Route services through the least sensitive and shortest practicable locations;
- Record any concealed historic fabric exposed and seek conservation advice before alteration; and
- Make good disturbed fabric and finishes using compatible materials and matching workmanship.

POLICY AND GUIDANCE

The proposal has been considered in the context of the Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2023, Planning Policy Wales, Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment, Cadw's Conservation Principles and Heritage Impact Assessment in Wales. These require change to be founded on an understanding of significance, proportionate, and designed to minimise harm while supporting the sustainable management and continued beneficial use of historic assets.

CONCLUSION

The proposal causes a modest and localised change to the plan and appearance of one ground-floor room. It retains the features making the principal contribution to significance and does not alter the building's exterior. With the mitigation identified above, the partitions, services and compatible insulation can be introduced without material harm to the special architectural or historic interest of Old Hall.

The limited impact is outweighed by the clear benefit of enabling the elderly occupants to remain in their home. The proposal therefore represents sensitive and proportionate management of change to the Grade II listed building.

SOURCES

Cadw, Old Hall Farmhouse - Full Report, reference 1696

Cadw, Heritage Impact Assessment in Wales

Royal Commission, Penley Old Hall, NPRN 36109

Wrexham County Borough Council, Listed Buildings