

**P-04-381: Restore North Wales Hospital**

**Denbighshire County Council to Deputy Clerk**

Dear Kayleigh,

Thanks for your email.

I've attached my last email to the petitioners which was shortly after the site visit by your Committee. You will note that I refer to previous correspondence with them but despite this they felt it necessary to submit a petition. Whenever they have contacted us we have responded quickly and as openly as possible. I have met them in a local pub with the local councillor to explain our strategy and future plans but despite all this they seem to misunderstand our intentions.

Since the visit to the site by the Committee we have updated our own Cabinet, the local Members Area Group which comprises the County Councillors for the area and we have updated the Town Council in an open forum. We have commissioned a DVD which we use to inform members of the public. It was on a loop in the town library over the Open Heritage Weekend in September last year. We have now informed the owner of the hospital that it is our intention to serve a Repairs Notice and if not complied with we will begin compulsory purchase proceedings. The Urgent Works which were ongoing at the time of the Committee's visit are now completed. The total cost of these works were £930k.

We are continuing with our efforts to save the building despite all the difficulties we face.

Regards,

Phil.

Phil Ebbrell  
Pensaer Cadwraeth / Conservation Architect  
Gwasanaethau Cynllunio a Gwarchod y Cyhoedd /Planning and Public Protection

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Dear Mr Morales,

Thank you for you email.

As I have been away for two weeks the visit by the Welsh Government Petitions Committee has taken place. Needless to say we are disappointed that you found it necessary to submit a petition after lengthy exchanges of

emails with this authority and with Welsh Government.

I have previously advised you by email and in person of the actions this authority is pursuing in an attempt to save this important listed building but it seems you are not prepared to accept our advice. In my absence my colleagues met the Committee and explained our strategy and the work that is progressing. We are awaiting the outcome of their visit.

With regards your specific questions I respond as follows.

The contractor has the experience of dealing with listed buildings and in the selective removal of certain parts of buildings without endangering the structure as a whole. He has also worked on another mental hospital near Abergavenny which was designed by the same architect as the one in Denbigh. In this case the entire timber structure (floors, roof and lintels) were badly contaminated with dry rot. This has resulted in uncontrolled collapse in places which has resulted in the loss of masonry walls. Consequently it has been necessary to remove nearly all the timber from the most important part of the main building (phase 1). As a result the roof has been removed and a temporary roof put in its place. This work has proved to be far more difficult than anticipated due to the fragility of the building. It has also been complicated by the presence of asbestos which our contractor is licensed to remove.

The work has been fully specified and recorded with a full photographic history of progress. A further photographic survey will be carried out on completion.

We are restoring nothing at the moment, we are only carrying out "urgent works" as defined by the listed building legislation. This is intended to arrest the deterioration of the building. We do not intend carrying out any work on other buildings on site as they are mostly in better condition. We have boarded up entry points into these building however and erected 70 warning signs around the site in order to deter trespassers into what are dangerous buildings.

We have agreed a long term strategy with Welsh Government with regards the bats on the site. We were not able to survey the building for the presence of bats because the building was too dangerous and therefore we were unable to apply for a licence hence the need to have a bat expert (as agreed with Welsh Government) to enter the building and survey it as our contractor made areas safe. Where bats have been found we have carried out measures to ensure they have continued access into secured areas. Welsh Government have been kept fully informed.

The temporary roof will be completed shortly. We not know how long the temporary roof will be needed, it depends on whether the owner cooperates with us or not.

I'm not sure what licences you refer to in your final paragraph. It has not been possible to follow normal procedures with this work because of the health and safety issues but we have dealt closely with Welsh Government with regards the listed building issues and the protected species. We have also liaised closely with CCW. Throughout the work H&S has been paramount and the Health and Safety Executive have been fully involved.

Yours sincerely,

Phil Ebbrell  
Pensaer Cadwraeth / Conservation Architect  
Gwasanaethau Cynllunio, Adfywio a Rheoleiddio/Planning, Regeneration & Regulatory Services

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Dear Mr Ebbrell,

Apologies if the Assembly petitions committee officer, Abigail Philips, has already contacted you regarding a visit to the site on the 1st of July?

Would formal access be granted so our petition can be taken to the next level?

Abigail has also asked whether we can ask questions that we feel are relevant to the petition. These questions are as follows:

In a supposedly sensitive listed restoration work process why has it been deemed necessary to contract a demolition company?

How is the work being recorded on site, is there an audit trail that can be followed?

How much of the site is being 'restored' and what will be done to safeguard further decay of other listed buildings/parts of the NWH site?

Although a bat expert is on site, there were pictures showing that bat species roost in the main building, have the appropriate licences been sought, and if so what are the long term plans/strategy to protect them on the NWH site?

Why is the 'temporary' roof still not on the main part of the building, plus how long is considered temporary?

Why have appropriate licenses been sought after and during the work rather than before, it cannot be to do with the speed needed in carrying out the works, ie urgent because the work has been progressively slower and drawn out than was anticipated?

Kind regards,

In anticipation,

Elizabeth Morales, of the Restoration for the North Wales Group.