

Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee

Inquiry into the Welsh Government's Historic Environment Policy

Response from Patrick Sims-Williams

I will not repeat many points which have already been made, except to emphasise:

1. The Commission has a particular status as a body at arm's length from Government, and I think that means that academics like myself have been willing and proud to serve on it and in many cases give their services for free. This has an obvious effect on the standard of the RCAHMW's publications.
2. The separation of powers between RCAHMW and CADW means that householders and landowners are much more likely to help the Commission's officers in their work of recording sites than they would if it were under suspicion of being an agency concerned with listed buildings permissions etc.
3. The work of the Commission is unique, and it would be naive to suppose that universities would take up the slack if work ceased in the Commission; universities are no longer able to work on long term projects, unless specially funded by the AHRC, and the type of project work undertaken by the Commission is not likely to appeal to the AHRC. The same applies to the NLW; it is inconceivable that it could afford the expertise to manage the RCAHMW's archives.
4. There may be a case for savings through closer working between CADW and RCAHMW in some administrative areas, but this would need demonstrating in detail.
5. Caution is needed: if it's not broken, don't mend it, as that could cost more.

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