

James Cowie  
Strata Florida Community Liaison Group

By email

Eich cyfeirnod  
Your reference

Ein cyfeirnod  
Our reference

Dyddiad  
Date

Llinell uniongyrchol  
Direct line

Ebost  
Email:

CD001

25 October 2023

0300 0256004

[scheduledmonuments@gov.wales](mailto:scheduledmonuments@gov.wales)

Dear James Cowie,

**ANCIENT MONUMENTS AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL AREAS ACT 1979  
APPLICATION FOR SCHEDULED MONUMENT CONSENT  
STRATA FLORIDA ABBEY (CD001)**

## 1. Introduction

1.1 Thank you for your application of 21 August 2023 to Cadw for scheduled monument consent to allow access to the Pilgrim at the above scheduled monument.

1.2 Cadw is a Department within the Welsh Government that undertakes the statutory functions of the Welsh Ministers in determining applications for scheduled monument consent.

1.3 Each application for scheduled monument consent is considered on its own merits in accordance with *Conservation Principles for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment in Wales* ([Conservation Principles](#)) and Annex A of *Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment* ([TAN 24](#)). In particular, TAN 24 explains that the main purpose of scheduling is to ensure the preservation of ancient monuments and, when considering an application for scheduled monument consent, there is a presumption against proposals which would involve significant alteration or cause damage or which would have a significant impact on the setting of remains.

## 2 Assessment

2.1. Your application and supporting documentation have been assessed by our Regional Inspector of Ancient Monuments who has recommended that conditional scheduled monument consent should be approved for (i) replacing an existing fence, (ii) replacing the gate at the entrance to the field, (iii) installing a chain supported on movable bollards, and (iv) installing picnic benches fixed to the ground surface. The reasons for the Inspector's conclusions are set out in **Annex A** of this letter.

2.2. I have carefully considered the impact of the proposed development on the scheduled monument and its setting in light of the advice that I have received from our Regional Inspector of Ancient Monuments. I have no reason to disagree with the

advice of our Regional Inspector and am satisfied that his recommendation is consistent with the objectives of Conservation Principles and TAN 24.

### 3. Decision

3.1. Accordingly, I hereby approve conditional scheduled monument consent for the proposed works as outlined in section 1.1.

3.2. In reaching this decision, I have taken into account the requirement of sections 3 and 5 of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. I consider that this decision is in accordance with the Act's sustainable development principle through its contribution towards the Welsh Ministers' well-being objective of *A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language*.

3.3. Any development control issues associated with wider development will be a matter for any application for planning permission. It is the responsibility of the applicant to establish whether any further approval or consents are required for the proposed development.

### 4. Conditions

4.1. The following conditions are intended to protect the monument from damage or significant alteration as set out in TAN 24: *The Historic Environment* and to ensure that details of the project are archived.

- a) The applicant shall provide Cadw with reasonable advance notice of commencement of works on site and shall afford access at all reasonable times to any Cadw official or archaeologist nominated by Cadw to monitor progress of the works;
- b) The approved works shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the application form, plans and documents as listed below. No variations are permitted unless they have been authorised in advance in writing by Cadw;

Number	Document / plan	Reference Number (if applicable)	Date
1	SMC application form signed by James Cowie and dated 21/08/2023		22/08/2023
2	Five number images showing the scheduled area		22/08/2023
3	Site Plan		22/08/2023

c) The approved works shall be carried out strictly in accordance with a 'Method Statement' to be submitted in advance and formally approved in writing by Cadw before work commences. The 'Method Statement' shall be adhered to throughout the project and any variations shall be approved by Cadw prior to works commencing;

d) The Method Statement shall provide for:

	<b>INFORMATION REQUIRED</b>	<b>Date when information required</b>
1	Details for installation of gate posts – particularly whether driving in posts / metal pipe or excavation receiver pits.	Before work commences.
2	Fixings for picnic benches	Before work commences.

e) Wherever possible fence and gate posts shall be driven into the ground surface using existing post holes;

f) If excavation for receiver pits for posts is proposed: no works, including site clearance, shall commence until Cadw has been informed in writing of the name of an appropriately qualified archaeologist operating to ClfA published standards and guidance<sup>1</sup> who is to be present to undertake a watching brief for any works or operation occurring within the scheduled area. No work shall commence until Cadw has confirmed in writing that the proposed archaeologist is acceptable;

g) A digital copy of the draft watching brief report shall be submitted to Cadw for approval 8 weeks of the archaeological fieldwork being completed<sup>2</sup>;

h) A digital copy of the approved watching brief report shall be submitted to the regional Historic Environment Record and National Monuments Record of Wales to be incorporated into these public records<sup>3</sup>, and the applicant shall inform Cadw when this has been completed;

i) A digital copy of the approved historic building report shall be submitted to the regional Historic Environment Record and National Monuments Record of Wales to be incorporated into these public records<sup>4</sup>;

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<sup>1</sup> Chartered Institute for Archaeologists <https://www.archaeologists.net/codes/cifa> .

<sup>2</sup> Cadw will retain a copy of the watching brief report for our records.

<sup>3</sup> Cadw requires formal confirmation of report deposit to discharge condition.

<sup>4</sup> Cadw requires formal confirmation of report deposit to discharge condition.

- j) That upon completion of the project the applicant shall produce a completion report including an annotated photographic record detailing the site before, during and after works took place. The draft should be sent to Cadw in digital format for approval within 25 working days of the works being completed; and
- k) Any historic or archaeological features not previously identified which are revealed when carrying out the works shall be retained *in situ* and reported to Cadw within two working days. Works shall be halted in the area/part of the site affected until provision has been made for retention and/or recording of the feature by a suitably qualified archaeologist in accordance with details submitted to and approved in writing in advance by Cadw.

## **5. Compliance**

5.1. Where a condition requires approval or any contact with Cadw you are advised to contact Louise Mees by email [scheduledmonuments@gov.wales](mailto:scheduledmonuments@gov.wales).

5.2. When all work has been completed and the conditions have been discharged, please complete and return the 'completion notice' at **Annex B** to Cadw. Section 2(6) of the 1979 Act provides that non-compliance with a condition attached to a grant of scheduled monument consent shall be an offence.

5.3. By virtue of Section 4 of the 1979 Act, if no works to which this consent relates are executed or started within 5 years from the date of this letter, the consent shall cease to have effect at the end of that period (unless it is revoked in the meantime).

5.4. This letter does not convey any approval or consent required under any enactment, bylaw, order or regulation other than Section 2 of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. It is the responsibility of the applicant to obtain any such approval or consent where necessary.

## **6. Mechanism for Challenge**

6.1 Section 55 of the 1979 Act explains that if you are aggrieved by the decision given in this letter, you may challenge its validity by applying to the High Court within six weeks from the date of my decision. Furthermore, the legislation explains that the grounds on which an application may be made to the Court are;

- a) that my decision is not within the powers of the Act (i.e. that I have exceeded the powers available under the Act); and
- b) that any of the relevant requirements set out in the Act have not been complied with and that your interest has been substantially prejudiced by the failure to comply.

The 'relevant requirements' mentioned above are defined in Section 55 of the 1979 Act and it is advisable to seek legal advice before taking any action.

6.2. Should you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

6.3 Finally, please note that your personal data is managed in compliance with the [General Data Protection Regulations](#).

Yours sincerely,

Denise Harris  
Casework Manager  
under authority of the Deputy Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism, one of the Welsh  
Ministers

**ANCIENT MONUMENTS AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL AREAS ACT 1979**  
**APPLICATION FOR SCHEDULED MONUMENT CONSENT**  
**STRATA FLORIDA ABBEY (CD001)**

**INSPECTOR'S ADVICE**

**1. Policy Context**

- 1.1 An application for scheduled monument consent (SMC) is considered on its own merits in accordance with *Conservation Principles for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment in Wales* ([Conservation Principles](#)) and Annex A of *Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment (TAN 24)*. [In particular, TAN 24 explains that the main purpose of scheduling is to ensure the preservation of ancient monuments and,](#) when considering an application for SMC, there is a presumption against proposals which would involve significant alteration or cause damage, or which would have a significant impact on the setting of remains. Therefore, applicants are expected to demonstrate that no practicable alternative route or location, avoiding the scheduled area, exists and that the need to undertake works outweighs the presumption in favour of the protection of the scheduled monument.
- 1.2 The Welsh Government's six principles for sustainable management of the historic environment in Wales are also used as a guide when considering applications for scheduled monument consent. These are:
- Historic assets will be managed to sustain their values.
  - Understanding the significance of historic assets is vital.
  - The historic environment is a shared resource.
  - Everyone will be able to participate in sustaining the historic environment.
  - Decisions about change must be reasonable, transparent and consistent.
  - Documenting and learning from decisions is essential.

**2. Strata Florida Abbey**

- 2.1 This monument comprises the remains of a medieval Cistercian abbey. Founded around 1184, Strata Florida is situated in an area of generally flat meadowland bordering the banks of the river Teifi.

The site housed a church; monk's choir; presbytery; cloister; chapter house; vestry; book store and dormitories. The church was by far the most important and the most used building within the entire monastery. In design, Strata Florida followed the classic Cistercian (white monks) 'Bernardine' plan, which had become fully developed by the mid-twelfth century. It was a cruciform, or cross-shaped, building aligned east to west. And, apart from the proportions and mass, the particularly distinctive White Monk features included the square-

ended presbytery at the east, and the side-arm transepts with virtually square eastern chapels. At Strata Florida there were three chapels to each transept, when frequently – at abbeys in both Britain and France – there were two. Overall, the church measured some 65m east to west by 35.7m across the transepts north to south.

As with Cistercian churches in general, Strata Florida was built to serve two almost entirely separate communities: the lay brothers (*conversi*) who used the nave or western half and the choir monks – who followed a much stricter regime – and whose lives were regulated around long hours spent in their choir stalls towards the east end of the building. The area to the east of the choir is referred to as the presbytery. This was the site of the high altar at which the daily community Mass was celebrated.

The monastic buildings – those structures where the community slept, where meals were prepared and eaten, where business was conducted and where the brothers took some relaxation – were situated to the south of the abbey church. They were grouped around three sides of a square or court known as the cloister. The greater part of the cloister can still be seen, though the southern end lies buried within the confines of the seventeenth-century Stedman house. The central court would have been surrounded on all four sides by walkways each covered with a lean-to roof. On the east side of the cloister, a long two-storey range of buildings ran southwards projecting from the line of the south transept. The upper floor of this range was occupied by the choir monks' dormitory.

On the ground floor, the space immediately beside the south transept housed the abbey's book store (*armarium*) and vestry. The Rule of St Benedict stressed the importance of divine reading in the life of a monk, and time was set aside during the Cistercian day for this purpose. The larger room to the east, with a doorway directly into the church, served as the vestry (*vestiarium*) or sacristy, the place where the vestments and liturgical vessels used in the services were stored in safety. There is the base of a lancet window in the east wall, and the pit nearby represents part of the burial vault for the tomb in the south transept chapel. Outside the three main ranges of the cloister, probably lie the sub-surface remains of the infirmary (which was ruinous by the dissolution) and the abbot's lodgings.

The fortunes of the abbey dwindled as time passed, so much so, that by the dissolution the community was reduced to just seven monks and their abbot. Strata Florida was finally closed in February 1539.

This application for SMC is made in relation to the southern part of the scheduled area, which potentially contains remains of buildings associated with the abbey, such as the refectory, infirmary, guesthouses, kitchens etc.

Key values include physical remains of buried structures, features and deposits of national importance directly related to the medieval abbey (evidential), evidence of use associated with the abbey (historical), clear views of and from the abbey (aesthetic) and religious / spiritual value (communal).

### **3. The Application**

- 3.1 This application for scheduled monument consent involves (i) replacing an existing fence, (ii) replacing the gate at the entrance to the field, (iii) installing a chain supported on movable bollards, and (iv) installing picnic benches fixed to the ground surface.

### **4. Assessment**

- 4.1 The applicant consulted Cadw in advance of submitting the application for SMC and attended a site visit with the IAM to discuss their proposal. The applicant has submitted a plan, photographs, and details for their proposals, which reflect the advice from Cadw and are sympathetic to the monument.
- 4.1 Replacing an existing fence will potentially cause harm to buried archaeological features. The extent of harm can be reduced by reusing existing post holes wherever possible and is likely to be highly localised and minimal compared to the extent of the monument. The fence will affect views and movement across the scheduled area. The visual impact is reduced by using timber post and wire stock netting fence, compared with a solid barrier. The physical barrier is reinstatement of the existing, which is required to enable stock grazing. The minimal negative impacts to physical and aesthetic values are outweighed by the benefits of enabling public access and a safe space to enjoy the monument and view the pilgrim sculpture (communal values).
- 4.2 Replacing the existing gate and inserting new posts will potentially cause harm to buried archaeological features. The extent of harm can be reduced by reusing existing post holes wherever possible and is likely to be highly localised and minimal compared to the extent of the monument. Insertion of the metal pipe into the ground has potential to cause harm to buried remains. To avoid impact the metal pipe should be driven into the ground. A watching brief will be required if excavation of a receiver pit is required. Bolting a post to the wall of Ty Pair may require listed building consent: the applicant is advised to consult Ceredigion County Council for advice. The gate will affect views and movement across the scheduled area. The visual impact is reduced by a traditional gate. The physical barrier is reinstatement of the existing, which is required to enable stock grazing. The minimal negative impacts to physical and aesthetic values are outweighed by the benefits of enabling public access and a safe space to enjoy the monument and view the pilgrim sculpture.
- 4.3 Installation of a chain supported on movable bollards will not have a negative impact on physical remains. The visual impact will be reduced by using a sympathetic colour for the bollards, such as brown or green.
- 4.4 Installation of 2 or 3 picnic benches fixed to the ground surface will potentially cause harm to the ground surface. The extent of harm can be minimised by including an SMC condition for the type of fixing to be agreed with Cadw. The



benches are an addition of modern features to the monument. This will have a minimal impact on the appearance of the monument, which is outweighed by the benefits of enabling public access and a safe space to enjoy the monument and view the pilgrim sculpture (communal values).

## **5. Recommendation**

- 5.1 Overall, the proposals are likely to only have minimal impacts on physical and aesthetic values, which are outweighed by benefits to communal values. Any negative impacts can be further reduced by including conditions for Cadw to agree the method for installation of gate posts and fixing of benches to the ground surface. I recommend that consent is granted according to the following conditions:

## **6. Proposed Conditions**

- 6.1 The applicant shall provide Cadw with reasonable advance notice of commencement of works on site and will afford access at all reasonable times to any Cadw official or archaeologist nominated by Cadw to monitor progress of the works.
- 6.2 The approved works shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the application form, plans and documents as listed below. No variations are permitted unless they have been authorised in advance in writing by Cadw.

<b>Number</b>	<b>Document / plan</b>	<b>Reference Number (if applicable)</b>	<b>Date</b>
1	SMC application form signed by James Cowie and dated 21/08/2023		22/08/2023
2	Five number images showing the scheduled area		22/08/2023
3	Site Plan		22/08/2023

- 6.3 The approved works shall be carried out strictly in accordance with a 'Method Statement' to be submitted in advance and formally approved in writing by Cadw before work commences. The 'Method Statement' shall be adhered to throughout the project and any variations shall be approved by Cadw prior to works commencing.
- 6.4 The Method Statement shall provide for:

	<b>INFORMATION REQUIRED</b>	<b>Date when information required</b>
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1	Details for installation of gate posts – particularly whether driving in posts / metal pipe or excavation receiver pits.	Before work commences.
2	Fixings for picnic benches	Before work commences.

- 6.5 Wherever possible fence and gate posts shall be driven into the ground surface using existing post holes.
- 6.6 If excavation for receiver pits for posts is proposed: no works, including site clearance, shall commence until Cadw has been informed in writing of the name of an appropriately qualified archaeologist operating to ClfA published standards and guidance<sup>5</sup> who is to be present to undertake a watching brief for any works or operation occurring within the scheduled area. No work shall commence until Cadw has confirmed in writing that the proposed archaeologist is acceptable.
- 6.7 A digital copy of the draft watching brief report shall be submitted to Cadw for approval 8 weeks of the archaeological fieldwork being completed<sup>6</sup>.
- 6.8 A digital copy of the approved watching brief report shall be submitted to the regional Historic Environment Record and National Monuments Record of Wales to be incorporated into these public records<sup>7</sup>, and the applicant shall inform Cadw when this has been completed.
- 6.9 A digital copy of the approved historic building report shall be submitted to the regional Historic Environment Record and National Monuments Record of Wales to be incorporated into these public records<sup>8</sup>.
- 6.10 That upon completion of the project the applicant will produce a completion report including an annotated photographic record detailing the site before, during and after works took place. The draft should be sent to Cadw in digital format for approval within 25 working days of the works being completed.
- 6.11 Any historic or archaeological features not previously identified which are revealed when carrying out the works shall be retained *in situ* and reported to Cadw within two working days. Works shall be halted in the area/part of the site affected until provision has been made for retention and/or recording of the feature by a suitably qualified archaeologist in accordance with details submitted to and approved in writing in advance by Cadw.

Name of Inspector: Louise Mees

Date: 22/10/2023

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<sup>5</sup> Chartered Institute for Archaeologists <https://www.archaeologists.net/codes/cifa> .

<sup>6</sup> Cadw will retain a copy of the watching brief report for our records.

<sup>7</sup> Cadw requires formal confirmation of report deposit to discharge condition.

<sup>8</sup> Cadw requires formal confirmation of report deposit to discharge condition.

**COMPLETION NOTICE****Name of Monument: STRATA FLORIDA ABBEY****Monument Number: CD001**

<b>Conditions</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Signature</b>
The applicant shall provide Cadw with reasonable advance notice of commencement of works on site and shall afford access at all reasonable times to any Cadw official or archaeologist nominated by Cadw to monitor progress of the works;		
The approved works shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the application form, plans and documents as listed. No variations are permitted unless they have been authorised in advance in writing by Cadw;		
The approved works shall be carried out strictly in accordance with a 'Method Statement' to be submitted in advance and formally approved in writing by Cadw before work commences. The 'Method Statement' shall be adhered to throughout the project and any variations shall be approved by Cadw prior to works commencing;		
If excavation for receiver pits for posts is proposed: no works, including site clearance, shall commence until Cadw has been informed in writing of the name of an appropriately qualified archaeologist operating to ClfA published standards and guidance who is to be present to undertake a watching brief for any works or operation occurring within the scheduled area. No work shall commence until Cadw has confirmed in writing that the proposed archaeologist is acceptable;		
Completion of works on site		
A digital copy of the draft watching brief report shall be submitted to Cadw for approval 8 weeks of the archaeological fieldwork being completed		

A digital copy of the approved watching brief report shall be submitted to the regional Historic Environment Record and National Monuments Record of Wales to be incorporated into these public records , and the applicant shall inform Cadw when this has been completed;		
A digital copy of the approved historic building report shall be submitted to the regional Historic Environment Record and National Monuments Record of Wales to be incorporated into these public records ;		
That upon completion of the project the applicant shall produce a completion report including an annotated photographic record detailing the site before, during and after works took place. The draft should be sent to Cadw in digital format for approval within 25 working days of the works being completed		
Any historic or archaeological features not previously identified which are revealed when carrying out the works shall be retained in situ and reported to Cadw within two working days. Works shall be halted in the area/part of the site affected until provision has been made for retention and/or recording of the feature by a suitably qualified archaeologist in accordance with details submitted to and approved in writing in advance by Cadw.		

Applicant Name:

Signature:

When all work has been completed and the conditions have been discharged, please complete and return this completion notice to Cadw at [scheduledmonuments@gov.wales](mailto:scheduledmonuments@gov.wales)