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# Bishop's Palace revamp planned

The Bishop's Palace in Abergwili, Carmarthen, has extensive grounds which are part of an ongoing revamp project by the Tywi Gateway Trust.

A GRAND dining room at an historic Carmarthen landmark is being restored to its former glory as part of a wider £2.3m make-over of the property and surrounding land.

The Tywi Gateway Trust has ambitious plans to conserve and revitalise Bishop's Palace park in Abergwili.

The palace is also home to the county council owned Carmarthenshire County Museum.

The plans include the revamping of the gardens, the walled kitchen garden, the Great Meadow and the Bishop's Pond.

Now further plans have been unveiled by Carmarthenshire Council to turn back the clock and restore the impressive dining room at the Bishop's Palace itself.

A planning application has been lodged with the local authority by planning agents Pembroke based Acanthus Holden Architects.

A report by the Cardigan Building Preservation Trust within the application states: "The restoration of the Bishop's dining room forms one part of a wider project to restore other areas of the Bishop's Palace.

"The room is currently used as a display space for

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the museum, using a number of partitions to create a walkthrough area.

"The proposal includes work to remove all partitions to re-open the space into one large room for the display of artwork on the walls.

"Essential repairs will be made to the wooden parquet flooring and features such as the two fireplaces to either end and the three blocked up windows will be uncovered and restored where necessary."

The Bishop's Palace first dates back to around 1291 when it was connected with the foundation of a college by Bishop Thomas Bek. Over hundreds of years it has been restored and revised with various architectural styles before being mostly destroyed by a fire in 1903.

It was rebuilt by 1907 by architect W D Caroe, who followed the plan and detail of the former building whilst carefully integrating the arts and crafts styles of the time.

Historical analysis indicates that the Bishop's dining room was originally three smaller rooms which were opened up

into one large dining room by Caroe after the fire, and used as a dining room up until 1972 when it was converted into a museum.

Elsewhere within the planning application a report for the applicants by Scourfield Consultancy states the huge historical importance of the Bishop's Palace. It states: "The former Bishop's Palace is extremely important historically as the centre of what was a vast Diocese, and architecturally as a medieval building, remodelled as an exceptionally early example of the Tudor Revival in the 1820s.

"The palace is almost 'fossilised' as a large and prestigious Edwardian house, which has escaped the usual alteration and modifications for modern domestic life."

Alongside the dining room restoration, central to the overall project will be the Tywi Gateway Centre, which will house activities, learning facilities and a coffee shop.

The building was first listed in 1951 and amended to II in 2003.

The planning application for the dining room restoration is expected to go before the council's planning committee in the near future.



The Bishop's Palace in Abergwili, Carmarthen, pictured in 1903.