

**HERITAGE IMPACT STATEMENT FOR PROPOSED WORKS AT No. 1 QUAY  
STREET, AMMANFORD, CARMARTHENSHIRE**



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## **1. Introduction and Objectives**

**1.1.** This heritage statement has been prepared to accompany the listed building application for proposed works at 1 Quay Street, namely the conversion to offices at first floor level and three residential flats to the upper floors, the ground floor retained in commercial use. The scheme involves minimal external alterations and some internal reconfiguration of a much-altered interior..

This report draws on the guidance on the statutory requirement to prepare a heritage impact statement in tandem with an application for listed building consent. The guidance is complementary to the Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and is underpinned by the modern conservation philosophy of Cadw's Conservation Principles for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment in Wales (2011).

**1.2** The building is Grade II listed, designated as such on 10/08/1994. The listed building description is attached at Appendix A. It was built 1909-10 for the Capital and Counties Bank, the two bays to Quay Street originally occupied as a shop, the window in-filled to match when the bank took in the shop. The building is a prominent three-storey structure, a typical Edwardian Baroque corner bank complete with small dome.

**1.3** The proposal comprises:-

- External alterations including the reinstatement of a doorway to Wind Street and the insertion of a doorway to Quay Street.
- The conversion of the building to offices and three apartments including the provision of a stair-well and internal reconfiguration of partitions.

## **2. Historical and Architectural Significance**

**2.1 Historical Context.** Ammanford developed from a crossroads settlement, Cross Inn, from the later C19. As late as 1880 (when Ammanford was given its name), there was just a cluster of houses, three chapels and a foundry, with the industrial focus being the chemical works at Pontamman. Anthracite and tin-plate were the main engines of growth, and the town was developed in a bare quarter-century. The local wealth is expressed in the decent quality of the houses, the scale of All Saints' Church and the rich chapel interiors. The town centre is small, but fully urban in scale. The three-storey Terrace, containing the Arcade was built in 1898-99, designed by the prolific Henry Herbert, mining engineer, surveyor, architect and chapel deacon, for his brother-in-law, Evan Evans. Both families were the pioneers of Edwardian Ammanford, developing much of the town centre.

The development of Quay Street followed, the Capital and Counties Bank in 1909-10, a prominent corner building, with four bays to Wind Street and two to Quay Street. The building also contained a shop facing Quay Street - the pillar-and-partition construction of the division between bank and shop was clearly intended to allow the flexibility of a single unit if required. Old photographs show the original plate-glass shopfront (figure 1). The construction suggests that the adjacent three-storey terrace of shops formed part of the same development.



Figure 1 - Early C20 view showing former shop-front to Quay Street elevation of building

The Capital and Counties Bank was bought out by Lloyds in 1918, who operated the Ammanford premises until 2003, after which the building was used for offices and adult education. Several alterations have been made to the building at various dates. The shop premises in Quay Street were conjoined with the bank, the original partitions taken down (replaced after 2003) and the shopfront blocked to create a rusticated frontispiece to match the bank. A doorway to Wind Street, serving the upper floors of the bank was blocked to create a window (figure 2) and the attractive



oriel bays to Quay Street (shown in figure 1) were taken down. Interior alterations have preserved only the staircase, some simple cornices and the odd door.

The architect of the building is something of a mystery. The list description suggests R.L. Roberts, although citing any sources. The Pevsner Guide gives David Thomas of Ammanford. R.L. Roberts is an unlikely candidate - he was based a considerable distance away in Abercarn, designing a number of schools, chapels and institutes in that area. David Thomas on the other hand is described in the 1911 census as an architect and surveyor, practising on his own account, aged only 29. He designed the YMCA in Iscennen Street in 1909 and in the 1910 Kelly's Directory is listed as 'architect & civil & mining engineer, & surveyor & inspector of nuisances to the Urban District Council', a position he still held in 1923. Davies was clearly a young man of talent, taking advantage of the rapid growth of his home town. The bank must have been a major commission for him.



Figure 2 - early C20 view showing former Wind Street doorway (left), later blocked

**2.2 Aesthetic Context.** The building is a classic Edwardian bank premises, typically built to take advantage of a corner site, the entrance on a prominent street corner. The style is neo-Baroque, one that had replaced the stolidity of the Italianate from the 1890s, the inherent exuberance a reflection of both Edwardian prosperity and the aspirations of the bank. By this period, the larger banks and building societies tended to use in-house architects on a regional basis. The North and South Wales Bank (later part of HSBC) used the Liverpool firm of Woolfall & Eccles for example (e.g. Aberystwyth, 1908 and Llandeilo, 1913). W.W. Gwyther designed National Provincial Banks (later Natwest) at Aberystwyth (1903) and Carmarthen (1904). For Lloyds, A Lloyd Oswell worked at Llandeilo in 1911, Lloyds being less

rigid with regards to commissioning works. The Capital & Counties Bank, which had 473 branches by 1918 evidently worked in similar vein.

The site is perhaps the most eminent in town, the junction between the two main streets, Wind Street and Quay Street. The scale matches that of the earlier Terrace, similarly built of faced brick, the bank however using expensive ashlar detail rather than moulded terracotta. The corner dome is typical of urban banks of the date, here somewhat sandwiched between two shaped gables with large thermal windows.

**2.3 Communal Value.** There can be no doubt in most minds of the original function of the building! It is one of the key structures in the new town of Ammanford, one which served the town's needs up to 2003. It remains a much-loved landmark in the centre of an attractive little town centre that continues to thrive.

**2.4 Evidential Context.** Several internal alterations were made during the later C20, including the blocking of the Wind Street door and the flooring of the former stairwell. Typically, partitions have been inserted to upper floors for offices, kitchens, toilets etc and fireplaces and original doors removed. Some cornices remain to the ground and first floors. At attic level, most of the partitions have been removed. See 2.5. for further comments on the plan-form.

After ceasing trading as a bank, the building was used as offices and classrooms for further education. Since lying empty, there has been an outbreak of dry rot that has damaged some internal fabric including some of the ground floor ceiling.

**2.5. Plan-form/Interior Fixtures.** At ground floor level, the pillars dividing the two main spaces suggest that the original intention was to provide the options of either a single or two commercial spaces, providing removable partitions between. As old photographs show, the Quay Street premises was entered via a shop front to the east, the bank via the corner doorway, and the upper floors of both premises via an entry off Wind Street. During the later C20, the partitions were taken down, the bank occupying the whole of the ground floor. The Quay Street shop front was blocked and replaced with rustication to match the original, the Wind Street door replaced with a window to match. The latter works involved the demolition of the steps within the doorway and the reduction of the landing to ground floor level. A new internal stair to the first floor was created and a coin-lift inserted alongside the western chimney-breast to the basement vaults. After 2004, new partitions were inserted.

The works carried out over the C20 have not entirely removed the character of the ground floor. Both main spaces retain simple compartmented ceilings with simple plaster cornices, the pillars with moulded caps.



Figure 3 - ground floor space

At first floor level, the original arrangement of three large rooms accessed off a spinal landing is basically intact. Presumably these were the offices of the manager and senior staff. The two rooms facing Wind Street retain simple plaster cornices, but have been conjoined via a simple wide opening, the former doorway off the passage blocked up.

From first floor to attic, the original staircase survives. It has turned balusters and newels with ball finials; ramped hand-rails.

At second floor level, a similar arrangement of rooms exists as the first floor, the three main rooms devoid of features.

At attic level, only a single four-panel door survives. The partitions are nearly all gone, and much of the lath and plaster ceilings/linings have been removed/patched. The Quay Street section was not fitted up as accommodation - it is merely a roof-void accessed via a hatch.



Figure 4 - detail of staircase



Figure 5 - first floor rooms





Figure 6 - damage to ground floor ceiling through dry rot

The basement - originally the bank vaults - have plain ceilings, the detail modernised, except for a large iron safe, presumed to be original.

**Sources:-**

*The Buildings of Wales - Carmarthenshire & Ceredigion* - Lloyd, Orbach and Scourfield 2006

*Ammanford - Origin of Street Names and Notable Historic Records* - W.T.H. Locksmith 1999

*The Amman Valley and District* - B. Lewis 1996

[Ammanfordtown.org.uk](http://Ammanfordtown.org.uk)

*Kelly' Directory of South Wales 1910, 1923*

*Temples of Mammon - the Architecture of Banking.* J Booker 1990

1911 Census

### **3. Justification for the Proposed Works**

**3.1** The building, which ceased its primary use in 2004, was subsequently used as offices and adult education, uses which were temporary in nature, with little realistic revenue for much beyond basic maintenance. The building is now some 110 years old and showing evidence of deterioration - the outbreak of dry rot (now arrested) is especially unfortunate. The building is clearly in need of a new use - the proposed retail use to the ground floor perpetuates the historic use, as do the offices to the first floor. At second floor and attic levels, the proposed conversion to flats will ensure that the proposed scheme is economically viable and retain a permanent use for such a vulnerable building.

**3.2** It is considered that the scheme is conducive to the ongoing viability and attractiveness of Ammanford as a town centre for a large hinterland. The works are achievable with little need to change the exterior beyond the reversal of some later C20 works. Inside, the historic layout will remain essentially intact, retaining the few original features to survive.

**3.3** Whilst it is considered that the current scheme preserves the architectural and historic character of the building, other options have been considered, as follows:-

- Converting the whole to flats. Policy concerns aside, this will impact on the internal spaces of the building, especially the ground floor. The requirement for opening windows and ventilation at ground floor level will require the revision of the window details to replace the fixed plate-glass bank windows. The need for insulation, sound and fire-proofing to domestic standards is likely to require the insertion of false ceilings with further subdivision needed for kitchens, toilets etc, thus destroying the existing hierarchy of spaces.
- Extending the building is not feasible, given the very limited cartilage
- Reversing the later Quay Street frontispiece to recreate the former shopfront. It is considered that the proposed doorway both allows retention of the later bank alterations as well as reintroducing access off the street.
- Creation of single lateral attic flat (which require cutting through the flues)

### **4. Impact of the Proposed Works**

**4.1** The proposed works may be described as follows:-

## 4.2 Exterior works:-

- Re-slate roofs, reusing sound slates to visible elevations, using matching natural slate to hidden elevations, reinstating red roll-top ridges. Breathable felt to be incorporated to building regulation standards. Re-place all lead flashings to chimneys, abutments, parapets etc to current standards. Impact: **low**
- Overhauling of all cast-iron downpipes and replacement of defective sections to match. Impact: **low**
- Repair and redecoration of all joinery; insertion of double-glazed units to replace substandard glazing within framing of modern windows (Quay Street elevation, first and second floors only). Impact: **low**
- Clean down, repair and redecorate rusticated ground floor. Impact: **low**
- Re-opening of Wind Street doorway as per old photographs. Impact: **medium**
- Provision of doorway and traditional doors to Quay Street elevation. Impact: **medium**.

## 4.3 Interior works:-

- Creation of internal lobby/stairs off Wind Street; removal of modern lift. Impact, removal of modern partitions between ground floor pillars. Impact: **low**
- .Repair of cornices; repair of ground floor ceiling bays where destroyed by dry rot. Impact: **low**
- Reconfiguration of first and second floor partitions as per drawings. Impact: **low**.
- Conversion of attic floor to flat, retaining historic door. Impact: **low**.
- Conversion of eastern roof void to upper floor of flat, including provision of separate staircase from second floor. Impact: **low**

#### **4.4 The proposed scheme has the following merits:-**

- The property will be repaired and put to viable and sympathetic use.
- The alterations are reversible
- The plan-form is retained substantially intact

### **5. The setting of the Listed Building**

**5.1** The setting of a listed building is the surroundings in which it is understood, experienced and appreciated, embracing present and past relationships to the surrounding landscape. Views to, from and across a historic asset are an obvious form of evaluation, but other sensory elements may be relevant too, including topography, layout, use, noise, and light pollution, as well as historic, artistic, literary, cultural or scenic associations, tranquillity and remoteness. When assessing proposals, local planning authorities are required to pay special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any other features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. This is set out in section 66 of the 1990 Act Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act.

**5.2** In terms of its historic setting, the building is a prominent former bank, located on the main crossroads of the town centre, surrounded by some attractive commercial premises, including The Terrace. Its listing as *a good example of Edwardian bank architecture, and architecturally the most important element of the town centre* says it all. None of this is diminished by the proposal.

### **6. Legislation and Policy**

**6.1** The legislative and policy context includes the following:-

- 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, section 66
- 2016 Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016
- Technical Advice Note 24 (The Historic Environment) 2017 including annex 1 (Historic Impact Assessment in Wales), 2 (Managing Change to Listed Buildings in Wales) and 6 (Setting of Historic Assets in Wales)
- Planning Policy Wales Edition 9 (November 2016), Section 6
- Carmarthenshire County Council Local Development Plan (2014) – policy EQ1 (Protection of Buildings, Landscapes and Features of Historic Importance)

- Conservation Principles for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment in Wales', Cadw, 2010.

## **6.2 Evaluation of the proposed scheme in the context of national policy**

**6.3** The main material policy document is Technical Advice Note 24 (The Historic Environment) 2017. Paragraph 5.13 requires consideration of a number of issues when determining a listed building consent application. These include:-

- The importance and grade of the building and its intrinsic architectural or historic interest.
- The physical features of the building which justify its listing and contribute to its significance, (for example its form and layout, materials, construction and detail) including any features of importance such as the interior, which may have come to light after the building's inclusion on the list.
- The contribution of cartilage and setting to the significance of the building, as well as its contribution to its local scene
- The impact of the proposed works on the significance of the building.
- The extent to which the proposed works would bring substantial community benefits for example, by contributing to the area's economy or the enhancement of its local environment.

The first four points comprise the crux of listed building legislation and it is considered that this statement addresses the relevant issues. In terms of the fifth point, it is certain that the proposal will enhance the local environment and highly likely that the restored building will contribute to the area's economy.

**6.4** Paragraph 5.14 states that 'Many listed buildings can sustain a degree of sensitive alteration and extension to accommodate continuing or new uses. Past changes that reflect the history of use and ownership may themselves be aspects of the special interest of the listed building'. It advises that 'when applicants and the local planning authority assess the heritage values and significance of a listed building, which is the subject of a consent application, they must consider the sensitivity of that building to the proposed changes. Sustaining the special interest and significance of a listed building through the process of alteration, extension or re-use is exacting, and should always be based on specialist knowledge and skill in order to realise the benefits that well-designed interventions can bring'.

It is considered that the building is capable of sustaining the degree of alteration proposed to sustain a new and sympathetic use and that a careful balance has been made against the heritage values of the building.

## **6.5 Evaluation of the proposed scheme in the context of current Local Authority Policy**



**6.6** . Policy EQ1 states that '*proposals for development affecting landscapes, townscapes, buildings and sites or features of historic or archaeological interest which by virtue of their historic importance, character or significance within a group of features make an important contribution to the local character and the interests of the area will only be permitted where it preserves or enhances the built and historic environment*'

It is considered that the proposal complies with this policy objective.

## **7. Evaluation of the proposed scheme in the context of the Conservation Principles.**

### *Principle 1 – Historic Assets will be managed to sustain their values*

Changes in the historic environment are inevitable and conservation of historic buildings is about the careful management of change, having special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

The proposed works are perceived as conserving the special character of the building whilst upgrading its facilities for modern-day retail/office/residential use. The works of alteration mainly concerns modernised fabric, reinstating a blocked doorway, as well as creating a doorway to the rebuilt Quay Street elevation.

### *Principle 2 – Understanding the significance of historic assets is vital*

In evidential terms, the structural history of the building is very straightforward and the building forms part of the well-recorded heritage of the area. Its later alterations added little of architectural/historic merit.

In terms of communal value, to the historian, the building is an attractive and prominent survival of Edwardian Ammanford, from its heyday as a colliery town. The proposed scheme has no impact on any of this.

### *Principle 3 – The historic environment is a shared resource*

Although privately owned, the building was built to serve the town, and is prominently sited. In terms of public interest, the legal procedures needed to obtain listed building consent provide the mechanisms for arbitrating between private and public interests.

*Principle 4 – Everyone will be able to participate in sustaining the historic environment*

It is hoped that this document will assist ensuring that decisions are taken in an open and transparent manner, as well as sharing what is known about the building to date, raising people's awareness and understanding of their heritage.

All contractors involved will be suitably qualified and/or experienced in undertaking works to best conservation practice.

*Principle 5 – Decisions about change must be reasonable, transparent and consistent*

It is hoped that this document will underpin this principle and provide a clear justification for proposed changes to the building

*Principle 6 – Documenting and learning from decisions is essential*

The information and documentation gathered as a result of the proposed scheme will be retained by the owners, with a copy provided to the RCAHMMW's public archive if required.

## **8. Assessing the changes in the context of the Conservation Principles**

Changes to the building will involve a combination of the following types of work:

*Routine management and maintenance*

The building is now in need of extensive repair and renovation.

*Repair*

- Overhauling of all cast-iron downpipes and replacement of defective sections to match.

- Repair and redecoration of all joinery; insertion of double-glazed units to replace substandard glazing within framing of modern windows (Quay Street elevation, first and second floors only).
- Clean down, repair and redecorate rusticated ground floor.
- Repair of cornices; repair of ground floor ceiling bays where destroyed by dry rot.

#### *Periodic renewal*

- Re-slate roofs, reusing sound slates to visible elevations, using matching natural slate to hidden elevations, reinstating red roll-top ridges. Breathable felt to be incorporated to building regulation standards. Re-place all lead flashings to chimneys, abutments, parapets etc to current standards.

#### *Archaeological intervention/intervention to increase knowledge of the past*

This is not applicable here.

#### *Restoration*

- Re-opening of Wind Street doorway as per old photographs.

#### *New work or alteration*

- Provision of doorway and traditional doors to Quay Street elevation. Reinstatement of the former shop-front has been avoided in favour of retaining the later works undertaken for Lloyds when the bank expanded.
- Creation of internal lobby/stairs off Wind Street; removal of modern lift, removal of modern partitions between ground floor pillars.
- Reconfiguration of first and second floor partitions as per drawings.
- Conversion of attic floor to flat, retaining historic door.
- Conversion of eastern roof void to upper floor of flat, including provision of separate staircase from second floor.

## **9 Conclusion**

**9.1** It is hoped that this report adequately addresses the impact of the proposal on the character and setting of the building, balancing the statutory requirement to preserve the listed building with government and local policy to retain it in suitable use and condition.

## APPENDIX A - LIST DESCRIPTION

**Entry Name:** Lloyds Bank Building

**Listing Date:** 10 August 1994

**Last Amended:** 10 August 1994

**Grade:** II

**Source ID:** 14815

**Location:** Prominently sited at angle of Quay Street and Wind Street in the centre of the town.

**County:** Carmarthenshire

**Community:** Ammanford

### History

1908-9 bank and offices, probably by R L Roberts.

### Exterior

Red brick and Bath stone dressings, slate roofs and brick stacks, loosely Edwardian Baroque style. Three storeyed and attic with two facades hinged on a curved domed corner. Two bays to Quay Street, two and a half to Wind Street, the Wind Street facade more elaborate. Painted stucco ground floor, red brick upper floors with ashlar window, piers between the bays, and flush band over first floor. Ashlar dentil cornice over second floor, interrupted by small curved pediments over each wall pier, and continued in painted wood as eaves cornice in second bays of each facade. Attic feature at the corner with squat leaded octagonal dome between two gables of equal height to dome finial. Dome rises from curved red brick parapet, leaded octagonal drum, the sides concave as inswept from parapet, timber cornice under dome proper and knob finial. Coped gables with concave abutments answering to the drum of dome and big tripartite lunettes with sills at parapet height, ashlar moulded architraves and three sunburst keystones, the outer keystones reaching diagonally to the gable coping. Next bay each facade has a flat small-paned dormer, Wind Street front also has a terminal attic feature, smaller, semicircular, raised on ashlar piers, with keyed roundel light.

Main floors have mixed fenestration, corner bay and narrow outer bay of Wind Street front have Georgian Style 12-pane sashes in moulded ashlar architraves with keystones and apron panels. Two bays to Wind Street and two to Quay Street have big 3-light mullioned windows with keystones, the centre light arch-headed, the outer



ones with top-lights. Wind Street windows are all in ashlar with C20 glazing, Quay Street has timber C20 version, probably replacing a timber original, in ashlar frames with keystones.

Ground floor is channelled painted stucco with raised piers, fascia and cornice. Semicircular pediments over piers. Arched openings and keystones, C20 plate glass, two windows in each of the larger bays, one in Wind Street end bay and arched door in ovolo-moulded surround to corner. Door has exuberant festooned keystone. Windows have aprons below and all ground floor openings are linked by string at roughly impost level that is carried down jambs of openings as a partial architrave.

### **Reasons for Listing**

Included as a good example of Edwardian bank architecture, and architecturally the most important element of the town centre.