



RYDAL PENRHOS, COLWYN BAY

**(Formerly Pwllcrochan
House)**

LL29 7AA

Draft Heritage Statement and Appraisal

**For
Castle Green Homes**

Dated. February 2021.

PRELIMINARY INFORMATION
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PRELIMINARY INFORMATION

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RYDAL PENRHOS, COLWYN BAY

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1.00 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

This Heritage statement and appraisal follows the principles of Best Practice guidance as set out by CADW in their publication *"Heritage Impact Assessment in Wales"*. It follows the guidance on how and why Heritage Impact assessments will be required and is intended to reflect the requirements of CADW's *"Conservation Principles for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment in Wales"*. The aim of this particular project is to achieve high-quality sensitive change, using the principles of good design to inform the creative proposals to save and re-use a prominent Grade 2 listed building in a manner that is entirely in keeping with its history, heritage and architecture. The current proposals will help to ensure this building continues to have a prominent and sustainable place in the future townscape of Colwyn Bay as well as in its history.

2.00 - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Rydal Penrhos is one of the jewels in the crown of the architectural heritage of Colwyn Bay. It is a significant landmark building, partly dating to 1821 and with connections going back to when the bay was first laid out as a planned resort town. It is in a very prominent elevated setting and in its original function was as a residence from where the resort was conceived. It's more recent uses as a hotel, a government office building and an Independent boarding school help to explain the form and slightly confused configuration of the building. The parkland around Rydal Penrhos is currently being considered for residential redevelopment with high quality new housing which will be laid out to create space around the main building and to retain its landscape setting. Proposals are being brought forward for a creative re-use of Rydal Penrhos itself to become 34 new apartments that will maximise the benefit that they gain from their setting and from the quality of the listed building, even if this has become confused by multiple layers of previous development and history. The development of Rydal Penrhos and its parkland setting are fully in line with the aspirations as defined in the masterplan for the future regeneration of Colwyn Bay and for its resurgence as a tourist destination as well as a key town on the A55 North Wales coastal corridor and a place to live and to work.

Rydal Penrhos occupies a prominent north-facing hillside and is surrounded by open parkland containing many fine mature trees that will not be affected by the conversion of the Listed Building. Some of the



Image 01 - Photograph showing entire building retrieved from <https://ie-today.co.uk/news/rydal-penrhos-to-stop-boarding-by-2021/> 02.03.21

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Image 02 - Photograph showing entire building retrieved from http://llandudnoandcolwynbay.blogspot.com/2009/08/pwilycrochan_14.html 03.03.21

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parkland has been used as sporting facilities associated with the use of the building as a school. The proposed redevelopment of this parkland has been designed to make good use of the topography of the site and to retain the mature trees in order to preserve the setting of the Listed building. The tarmac apron around the building was used for staff and guest parking when the building was a school. Our proposal is to re-order and re-model this to create resident's parking associated with the apartments. The aim is to ensure that parked cars do not dominate the setting of the building but that they are conveniently sited for people that live in the building. The site can be seen from a distance and it has magnificent views over the Irish Sea with a foreground of the roofs of the town of Colwyn Bay. One of the original owners of the house was responsible for laying out the town as a resort so this building is an integral part of the past, present and future of the town.

The proposed apartments will vary in size and layout depending on their location in the building. Some of the largest apartments will be housed in the grandest rooms in the former house / hotel and will in themselves be generously planned to avoid difficult or potentially clumsy subdivision of large spaces that would be damaging to the architectural integrity of the main living spaces. Such design variety will provide a diverse selection of apartments, suited to different budgets and varying household needs. This is an important part of the interest that can be derived from converting old buildings to serve new functions.

There is plenty of evidence that the building has been altered and extended over its life and whilst some of these additions are appropriate and of good quality, others are inappropriate and either poor, dated or they were built for very specific purposes that no longer exist and that don't make a specific contribution to the history of the building. The current proposals involve careful and selective stripping away and removal of these low quality additions to reveal the original building and to enhance its potential for redevelopment of the historic core of the main house and former hotel.

This report explains the process of identifying and appraising the original 1821 house, the later additions that were made when the building became a hotel and the more recent extensions that were added to make the building suitable for use as a Preparatory Boarding School. Some of these additions are as recent as the 1970s and 1980s, when the aim was to increase teaching space in the school. Removal of these recent additions is in no way damaging to the building. Much of



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Image 01—1921 postcard of Pwllcrochan Hotel retrieved from <https://denbighshirearchives.wordpress.com/2013/03/19/j-m-porter-collection-pwllcrochan-estate/> 03.03.21

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Image 02 - Newspaper Advertisement of Hotel retrieved from https://colwynbayheritage.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/pwllcrochan-hotel-1921_22.jpg 03.03.21

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the interior is well preserved, considering the uses the building has had It mainly dates from the late C19th when the building was in use as a hotel. The main public spaces retain much of their original detail and considering their previous use as a school, they have survived remarkably well. We are very keen to avoid the need for damaging interventions such as partitions that clash with windows, cornices that collide with internal walls and clumsily shaped rooms, where larger spaces have been broken up. By careful design. The need for these damaging changes can be greatly reduced or even eliminated. Some interior spaces are very grand and will make very attractive apartments

The building was turned into a Preparatory School before WW2 and reverted to this use after it ceased to be a Ministry of food office building. It has remained in educational use until fairly recently and has yet to be fully vacated by the school. The school itself remains open but has largely been relocated to a site close by but has stayed in the town of Colwyn Bay where it is now in more suitable modern premises, leaving much of Rydal Penrhos vacant. The building is very large and as a consequence, a strategy for its re-use was needed that could sub-divide it without major damage. The proposal to decant students and staff to the main campus creates the opportunity to fully utilize this important listed building and to see the building return to residential use; The purpose for which the main part of the original 1821 building was first designed and built and which is entirely appropriate as a basis for its future retention and sustainability within Colwyn Bay.

Ainsley Gommon Architects (AGa) is a North Wales and Merseyside Based RIBA Chartered Practice which includes an RIBA Registered Conservation Architect amongst the directors. The practice has taken a very active role in regeneration and conservation initiatives to help to re-invigorate a number of listed and historically important buildings, which were creatively re-used and re-purposed. Examples of conservation projects include the Hamilton Quarter of Birkenhead, Birkenhead's Grade 1 listed and scheduled Priory site and the master-planning of a long-term regeneration strategy for the planned worker's village of Bromborough Pool. Projects in North Wales include improvements and remodelling of rooms at the Grade 1 listed Gladstone's Library in Hawarden, conversion of St Winefride's convent school into residential accommodation, and textile mill conversion to craft centre for Flintshire County Council in Holywell.

These are a very small selection of our projects involving the practice



Image 01 - Photograph of exterior of building taken by AGa November 2020

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concerning the creative re-use of listed buildings over the last 30 years.

This Heritage impact assessment has been prepared in accordance with CADW guidance to explain the positive changes that we propose to make to Rydal Penrhos.

- It explains the significance of this building in architectural terms and as a key part of the history of Colwyn Bay.
- This building has most recently served as a school and that use is in the process of relocating, leaving the building without a clear future purpose. We are proposing to make carefully designed and managed changes to this historic asset that are in line with the principles of good design and that will help to conserve and enhance the building for the future and in the process, to give it a new use.
- Our assessment of the history and fabric of the building has helped our understanding of its significance and why limited changes should be acceptable and in some ways desirable.
- Our Heritage impact statement has been prepared to accompany our application for listed building consent so it will be supported by a CAD model of the building, plan section and elevation drawings and an extensive photographic record.
- In combination with our pre application consultation with the relevant authorities, our Heritage impact statement is intended to assist the decision makers to make robust and timely decisions.
- The building has been changed and adapted throughout its life and has served a number of different functions. The access arrangements that were required for each are also different so this statement describes our strategy for dealing with accessibility issues in the context of the current proposed uses. Some of the current access arrangements are very crude and whilst they have been functional, our proposal is that they should be upgraded.

This heritage impact assessment is intended to be fully proportionate with the significance of Rydal Penrhos and with the changes and modifications that are proposed to the historic fabric of the building

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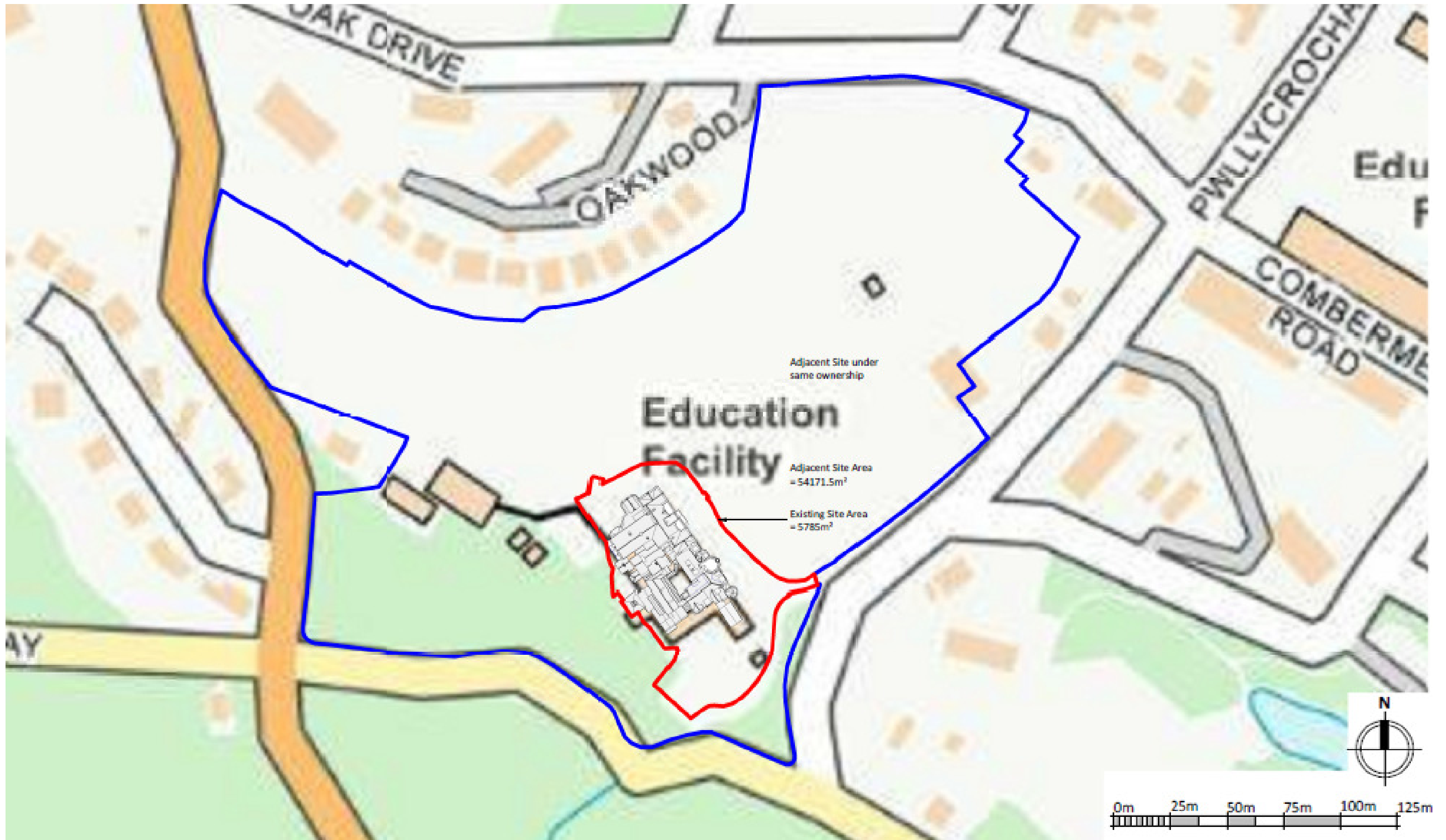
Image 01 - Photographs of exterior of building taken by AGa November 2020

2.00 - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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AINSLEY GOMMON ARCHITECTS AGA



3.00 - LOCATION

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Image 01 - Location Plan extracted from OS mapping

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Image 01 - Images extracted from Google Maps 02.03.21

4.00 - AERIAL VIEW

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5.00 HISTORY - Information from: colwynbayheritage.co.uk

In the early 19th century the area of what is now Colwyn Bay, from Nant y Glyn Road in the east to the West End to the west, and southwards to the edge of the built up area on Llanrwst Road, was part of the Pwllcrochan estate. The land was largely agricultural with a few farm buildings. The name Pwllcrochan means Cauldron pool, reflecting the stream which flows down the adjacent Dingle and passes the house of the same name. The first mansion called Pwllcrochan was probably built in the late 17th century by Robert Conway, who had acquired the land in about 1680. It was originally a smallish brick mansion. The current property is the successor of several mansions of the same name, in which have dwelt several generations of local squires. The land subsequently passed to the ownership of the Williams family and in 1808 was inherited by Jane Silence Williams. In 1821 she married Sir David Erskine of Cambo, Fifeshire and they decided to make Pwllcrochan their home, demolishing and replacing the existing house. Acres of land, hitherto fields, were planted with trees and additions were made to the woods, in which were made paths and rustic bridges. Small fields were combined to form parkland either side of the private drive (now Pwllcrochan Avenue) which led to the turnpike at the foot of the hill – now Abergele/Conway Roads. After Sir David died in 1841, his widow continued to live there with her six children. However Lady Jane and her son, the new Sir Thomas, in turn demolished the house and replaced it with what is part of the present property. In 1865, as Sir Thomas found that he needed to spend more time on his Scottish properties, he decided to sell his Welsh properties. The sale comprised the 1,850 acre Bodlondeb estate and 70 houses in Conwy and the 1,191 acre Pwllcrochan estate. The brochure for the Pwllcrochan estate stated that the "property commands one of the finest marine prospects in this most popular neighbourhood, with a splendid sea bathing beach 1¼ mile in length forming a perfect amphitheatre. The mansion will be sold in one lot and the remaining portion fronting the sea will be sold in separate lots to meet the great and increasing demand for marine residences on this coast. "Pwllcrochan mansion, its gardens and farm buildings and 700 surrounding acres of land were purchased for £26,000 by John Pender, a Manchester businessman whose interests were primarily concerned promoting transatlantic cables. He intended to develop a seaside resort to attract the affluent classes of Manchester and Liverpool.

The mansion itself was leased by John Pender to his agent John Porter,

COLWYN BAY NORTH WALES

PWLLYCROCHAN HOTEL. Beautifully situated in finely timbered grounds of twenty acres, at an altitude of 220 feet above sea level, adjoining the famous Pwllcrochan woods, offering a charming variety of magnificent mountain and marine views, and unrivalled as a centre for touring North Wales.



Within a short distance of the Station, Pier and Promenade Pavilion. Ground floor suites, lift, electric light, billiards, bathing, tennis and golf. Modern stabling and motorage.

Nat. Tel. No. 13.

Telegrams: "PWLLYCROCHAN," COLWYN BAY.

Image 01 - Historic newspaper image retrieved from <https://colwynbayheritage.org.uk/the-colwyn-bay-and-pwllcrochan-estate-company/> 02.03.21

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5.00 - HISTORY

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who converted it into a hotel in 1866. At that time the route from the hotel to the station wouldn't have passed a single building. John Porter subsequently bought the property's freehold when John Pender sold the estate in 1875. In 1887 a new wing was added in the Scottish baronial style designed by the principal architects of Colwyn Bay's development, Booth, Chadwick and Porter, Porter being the son of the Hotel's owner. Many important visitors stayed at the hotel, perhaps the most famous being David Lloyd George who visited during the First World War when he was Prime Minister. The property remained in the Porter family until 1938 when it was sold as an addition to Rydal School. During World War 2 it was one of many buildings in Colwyn Bay taken over by the Ministry of Food and was one of the buildings used to provide a staff canteen. When the Ministry vacated the building it reverted to its use as a school and since then has been used as the junior or preparatory school for Rydal School – now Rydal Penrhos.

Whilst over the years the building has been much altered and extended, many of the internal details of the hotel remain. Along with the external features and the place of the building in the history of Colwyn Bay these are important in justifying its protection as a Grade II Listed Building.

6.00 THE LISTED BUILDING DESCRIPTION

NOTE: The following is the CADW Listed Building description and references. The list entry only gives a brief overview of why the building was listed and is not a comprehensive description of why the building was considered to be of architectural and historic interest. It should be read as a brief summary of the significance of the building only.

Listed Buildings - Full Report – Heritage Bill CADW Assets - Reports

Reference Number: 14704 Building Number

Grade II : Status Designated

Date of Designation: 25/07/1994

Date of Amendment: 25/07/1994

Name of Property: Rydal Preparatory School (Pwlllycrochan)

Address / Location

Unitary Authority Conwy

Community Colwyn Bay

Town Locality Colwyn Bay

Easting 284203

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Image 01 - Historic image retrieved from <https://colwynbayheritage.org.uk/the-pwlllycrochan-estate/>
02.03.21

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Northing 378771

Street Side W

Location Prominently sited in an elevated position overlooking the town near the junction with Old Highway.

Description

Broad Class - Period - Education

History

The nucleus of an estate, a pre-existing house was rebuilt when the heiress of the estate married Sir David Erskine in 1821, and it was again remodelled or rebuilt in 1841. Lady Erskine sold the estate in 1865, and the house was bought by Sir John Pender, a Manchester and Glasgow merchant who was responsible for the early exploitation of the estate as the site of a new resort. He opened the house as a hotel in 1866, and his agent, John Porter, bought it when Pender sold up following the collapse of his business interests in 1875. The house was massively extended and remodelled as a hotel in 1886-7, by the principal architects of Colwyn Bay's development, Booth, Chadwick and Porter. The building was sold to Rydal School in 1952.

Exterior

Roughcast render with stone dressings and slate roofs. The house of c1821-41 forms the right hand section of the present paired gables to either side of an advanced embattled entrance tower. 4-centred arched doorway with swing doors installed on conversion to hotel, and probably of c1900; oriel window above, and 2-light mullioned window with hood mould in the upper storey, below the embattled parapet of the tower. Wider outer gables each have 3-light mullioned and transomed windows on principal floors (the floor-length lower windows enriched with quatrefoil frieze in the woodwork), and 2-light mullioned and transomed windows in the upper storey. Inner gables have 2-light mullioned and transomed windows on each floor. Stone coped gables and parapet rear wing may be partly early C19, but was probably enlarged when the building was used as a hotel: dining room extension in the W-facing angle of the rear wing is certainly an addition of c1887, although the complex ground planning of this room, together with the adjoining room, suggest that it may have been the result of a series of extensions. Canted in plan, with embattled stone parapet and cupola on roof, with mullioned and transomed windows. Angled canted bay window to dining room to its rear. In 1887-9, the original building was also massively extended towards the E. These additions, also 3-storeyed, comprised an



6.00 - THE LISTED BUILDING DESCRIPTION

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Images 01 and 02 - Photographs of interior taken by AGa November 2020

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asymmetrical 6 window range, with off-centre tower canted in plan. This has mullioned and transomed windows with leaded upper lights and drop-ended hood moulds. It terminates in machicolated parapet with corbelled turret; To its right, a canted angled bay window with hipped roof and a single window range adjoin the original building. To its left, a 2-window range, with 2 storey shallow bow window with embattled parapet. Advanced gable beyond, with paired sashes with high set transoms on each floor. 2-storeyed bay window wraps around the left-hand angle of this gable. Ground and first floor windows throughout have drop-ended hood moulds, and decorative leading and painted glass in the upper lights; moulded string course as cornice below the eaves. Parallel rear range linked to the main range by the W wing originally formed part of the hotel outbuildings.

Interior

The interior appears to have been entirely remodelled when the building was in use as a hotel, and many of the surviving fittings are probably of c1890: the present library and dining room open off the main hall with rich timber and glass screens, and the dining room has a richly decorated interior with coupled columns, coffered ceiling, and central lantern with painted glass panels. Other notable hotel interiors include the gentlemen's lavatories, which survive with most of their original fittings, and have richly tiled walls and a mosaic tiled floor.

Reason for designation

Pwlllyrochan House is of special historical interest as the nucleus for the development of Colwyn Bay, both as emblem of the estate on which the town was developed, and as one of its principal hotels. The remaining interior detail is particularly notable.

CADW : Full Report for Listed Buildings
[Records 1 of 1

<https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=14704>

3/19/2020

Listed Buildings - Full Report – Heritage Bill CADW Assets - Reports

<https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=14704>

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Images 01 and 02 - Photographs of interior taken by AGa November 2020

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Listed Buildings - Full Report – Heritage Bill CADW Assets - Reports

<https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=14704>

7.00 - DESCRIPTION

The following should be read in conjunction with the Listed Building Description as set out above.

The building sits on a sloping site and the main axis of the floor plan runs along the slope of the site and therefore faces north, looking out over the town of Colwyn Bay and over the Irish Sea beyond. There is a basement and four principal floor levels to the main formal part of the building. The top floor is mainly in the slope of the roof and many of the rooms at this level have generous dormer windows. The south side of the building has been adapted and extended at many stages in the use of the building. The ground level rises steeply behind the site and much of the slope is heavily wooded. The extensions on this side of the building are utilitarian in character and presumably served as staff accommodation and service areas rather than as lettable guest rooms.

Floor to ceiling heights at the back of the building are generally lower and link staircases have been added to facilitate access between the many floor levels that result. The rear part of the building was clearly not intended to be seen by guests and is a rather messy and confused piece of architecture as a result.

The grandest rooms in the building are at ground floor level where the ceiling heights are greatest. Floor to ceiling heights diminish on the upper floors in the classical tradition. The emphasis of the elevations is generally vertical. With tall windows that have low sills. Windows are designed to stack one above another and to diminish in size and a conventional hierarchical manner.

The different phases of the building are fairly easy to identify. When facing the front, the earliest (1821) part of the building is Pwllcrochan House is to the right. Viewed from above, the outline of the original 1821 building is clearly visible as a Tee shape with the formal rooms in the head of the Tee and a service wing in the tail. This would have been a



Image 01 - Photographs taken by AGa November 2020 showing exterior elements of the building

7.00 - DESCRIPTION

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AG | **A** AINSLEY GOMMON ARCHITECTS

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fairly common plan form at the time of construction in the Regency period. This house was originally symmetrical with a central entrance tower, capped with a turret that has a crenelated balustrade. There is a wing on either side of this central tower and each wing intersects with a gable that finished off the composition. The architecture has a well-balanced Regency character and is fairly simple and well mannered.

Some of the original windows have been replaced and a modern ramp has been formed to give level access up to the original main entrance, through a gothic arched main doorway. There is a small segmental oriel window centred over this door. This elevation has a very plain appearance but the original stone heads, quoins and sills are largely obscured from view by the heavy application of white paint. These features would emphasise the windows if they could be read as a part of the design. The architect of this original building is unknown but it must have been an attractive example of regional architecture with vernacular influences.

The designer of the hotel extension is also unknown but they were clearly influenced by the appearance of the original house although the extension is a far more flamboyant piece of design and high Victorian in character. Whilst the origins of the main house are clearly residential, the extension is identifiable as a hotel. The composition of the design is loosely based around a central tower which rises one storey above eaves level and is capped by both crenulations and machicolation. The plan of this tower is semi-octagonal and it is flanked to the right by a splay bay and to the left by a segmental bay and a splay bay. There is a small cylindrical turret in the centre of the front of the tower and a gable at the end of this wing, which reflects the similar gable at the other end of the frontage. The elevation of this part of the building is not symmetrical although a number of the architectural details that make up the front are symmetrical in themselves. Windows are generally tall with small, roughly square fanlights at the top. These fanlights contain decorative leaded panels, most of which survive in good condition. These are an important detail of the façade and they will be retained and restored.

The rear of the building has very little that is of any significance and selective demolition as shown on the proposals is aimed at stripping away poor quality additions from this side of the building and in the process, exposing the main facades of the 1821 house and the 1864 hotel

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Image 01 - Photographs taken by AGa November 2020 showing exterior elements of the building

7.00 - DESCRIPTION

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An outline of the history of the house and its ownership is set out in the Listed Building description and is not repeated here. By the mid-1860s, the building had become a hotel and in the late 1880s, it was roughly doubled in size by construction of a substantial extension on the south eastern end of the front façade. The proportion and style of the extension are complimentary to the original architecture although they are also far fussier in detail terms so the extension can be clearly identified from the original. Much of what is now evident as the building interior dates from this period.

The materials used across the two phases of the building help to unify the façade. The elevation has a roughcast render finish, which has been painted in a rather stark white masonry paint, which at the time of writing has not weathered too much and therefore helps to accentuate the size and bulk of the building. Many windows and doors have quoined reveals that are flush with the render and which only differ from it by their texture. The white paint has a unifying effect across the whole façade and many of the original details are now lost because of the painting. Old photographs show a contrast in colour to the window surrounds and give the building a completely different appearance.

The building has a roughly elongated rectangular plan form but with many projecting bays and turrets that complicate its outline and make it difficult to fully understand the sequence of works that have led to the building we have now. The main façade of the building faces North East and looks out over the Irish Sea towards Liverpool Bay. This is the main long elevation. The rear faces South West and this elevation has been subject to the most alteration over the life of the building. The original rear elevation has been altered and extended a number of times and this means that much of the rear of the building is now hidden by layers of increasingly recent development. In order to achieve a high quality conversion of the building, it is proposed that a number of layers of the building will be demolished to reveal earlier phases of the building and to open up the earlier facades to overlook the parkland setting of the building. The original building will be carefully protected when demolitions take place and original window positions will then become clear. The aim will be to reinstate the simple façade of the servants and staff quarters that occupied the rear of the building

The rear of the building is generally of fairly low architectural quality as it was not intended as a main viewpoint on the building. The two gable ends face North West and South East respectively. The South East



Images 01 and 02 - Photographs taken by AGa November 2020 showing views to Colwyn Bay

7.00 - DESCRIPTION

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elevation in particular has a modern two-storey addition dating from the use of the building as a school. This extension contains classrooms but it adds nothing to the architectural composition of the building and it is proposed that this will be demolished.

8.00 - COLWYN BAY TODAY - THE BIGGER PICTURE

In common with many of North Wales resort towns, Colwyn Bay has been through periods of boom and bust that have been driven by economic changes and changes in the way that people take their holidays. Colwyn Bay is an attractive resort town with good rail links serving Chester and Holyhead. It is also on the A55 corridor but has suffered from the way that this busy road now bisects the town and cuts the seafront off from other facilities in the town centre. The town retains some fine Victorian architecture and still has the feeling of a traditional seaside town.

The proposed development of Rydal Penrhos needs to be viewed in the context of regeneration initiatives that are taking place in Colwyn Bay. The vision statement from the 2011- 2022 masterplan for the town states that the aim is to make Colwyn Bay **'A thriving, attractive and vibrant town that is welcoming, safe and friendly; a place with a unique character that people are proud to live in'**. It goes on to reinforce this point by stating that?

This vision statement describes a new town which works on a number of important levels for visitors, business and residents.

A thriving town is where the economics, business opportunities and investment is co-ordinated and where the private sector can engage with a clear plan of action. Colwyn Bay's unique and picturesque setting must be exploited and enhanced and new buildings and spaces need to be the best possible in order to help strengthen and establish a strong identity for the town. A welcoming town is where visitors find the town uplifting, exciting and easy to get around with plenty of attractions encouraging visitors to see more, stay longer and spend.

The lifespan of the masterplan as originally designated comes to an end in 2022 so this timeframe has less than a year to run but many things have been achieved through the town regeneration scheme and some

01	02
03	04

Image 01 - Colwyn Bay beach
Image 02 - Victoria Pier
Image 03 - Imperial Hotel
Image 04 - Trillo Chapel

Images retrieved from <http://www.colwyn.org.uk/old-photos/> 03.03.21

8.00 - COLWYN BAY TODAY - THE BIGGER PICTURE

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initiatives are bound to continue after the designated period comes to an end.

The local authority has identified housing improvements and Heritage as key components in the regeneration of the town and in upgrading the “offer” that Colwyn Bay makes to residents and visitors alike. The masterplan makes reference to the number of large mainly Victorian properties that have become HMOs over time and that dominate some parts of the town. Although set in one of the more prosperous neighbourhoods of Colwyn Bay, the proposed regeneration of the Rydal Penrhos site and of the building itself will help to address some of the housing supply and quality issues in the town. This building is ideal for conversion into high quality apartments and for exploiting its heritage interest and architectural quality.

The relocation of the preparatory School will not only place the school into more suitable and modern accommodation in the town but has also left the former school building without a use and as a great opportunity for improvement and regeneration. The building may in future be surrounded by a new development of high quality open-market housing and a complimentary residential use is therefore appropriate for Rydal Penrhos as well. This development fits in well with the aims and objectives of the town masterplan and of the regeneration strategy. Careful and creative re-use of this building and its parkland setting will be a significant enhancement to the town.

9.00 - RECORDING

In order to formulate proposals for this site, we have commissioned a comprehensive measured survey of the building, which has used laser scanning techniques to generate an accurate 3D computer model of the whole building. We have noted elsewhere in this document that the facades of the building are painted white and that this has gone a long way to visually disguise some of the detail from the elevations. This was certainly the case with the laser scanner as the lack of contrast means that the laser failed to pick up points such as quoins around windows so these details have been manually surveyed and added to the 3D model to enhance the accuracy of the overall recording process. The laser scan has been supplemented by an extensive photographic survey of the inside and outside of the building and these photographs

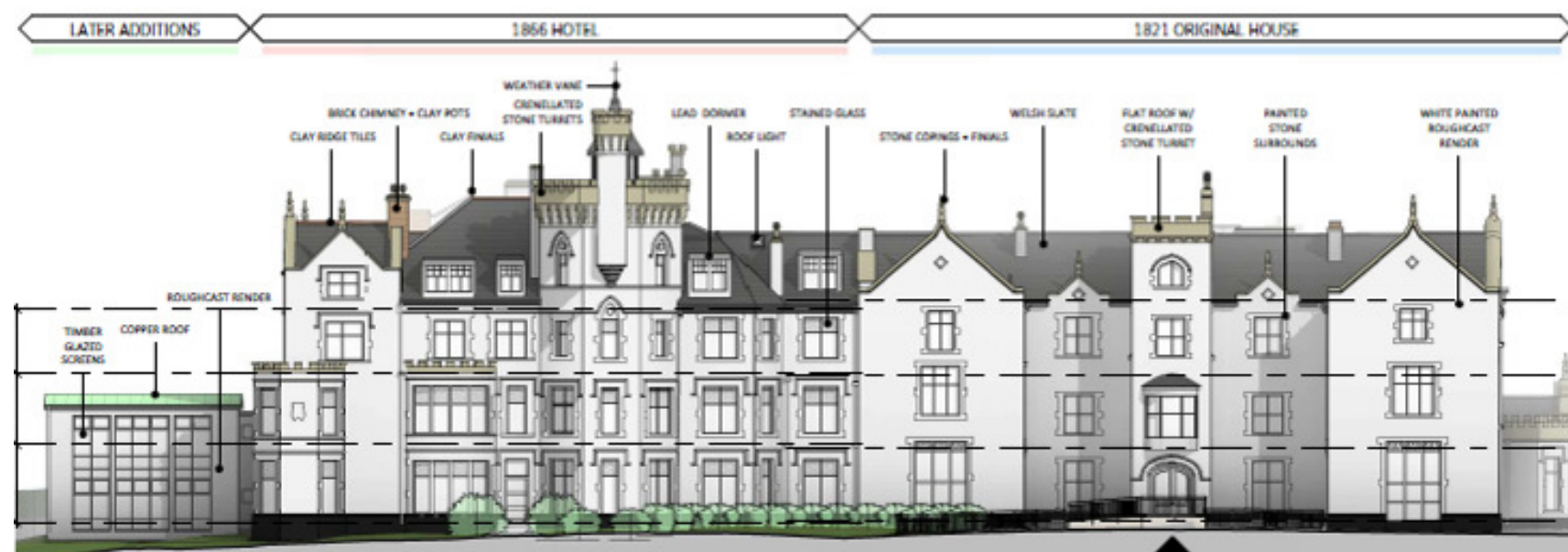


Image 01 - Existing North East elevation modelled by AGa

Image 02 - Existing North West Elevation modelled by AGa

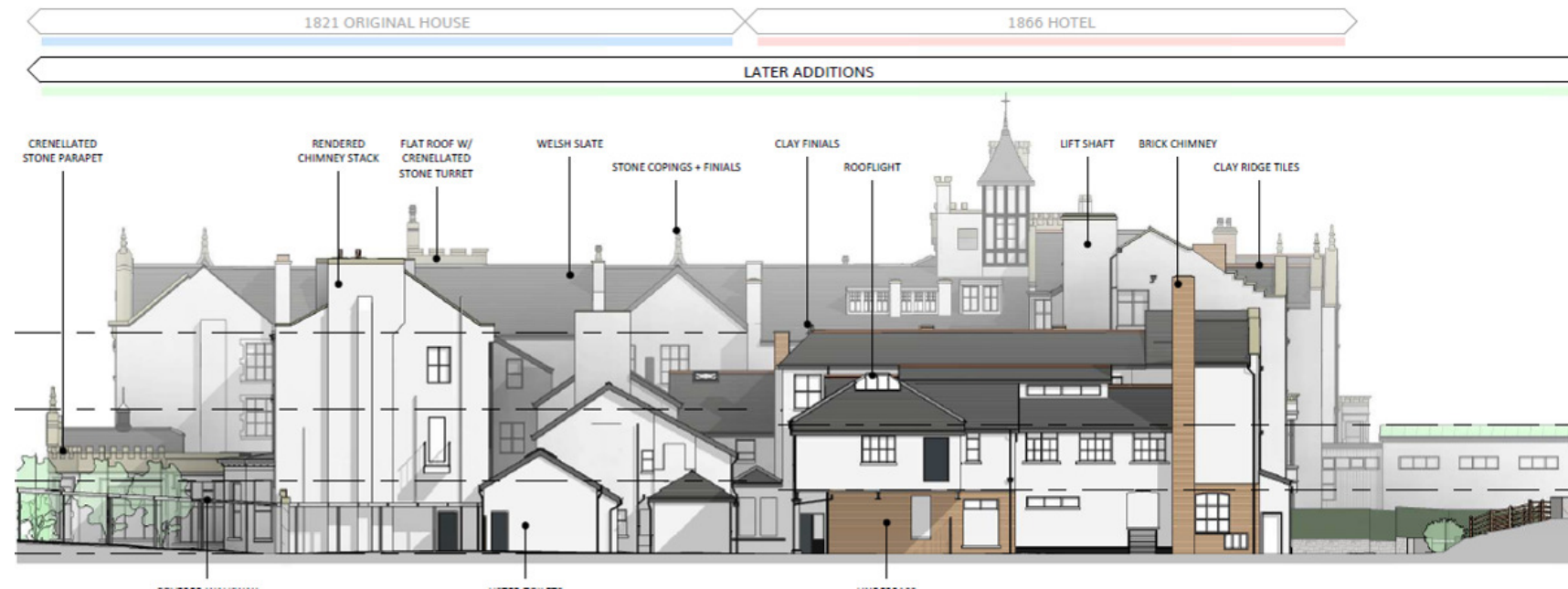
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9.00 - RECORDING

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form a part of the listed building consent application for the changes that are currently proposed.

The issues that we have experienced with the scanning of the building help to highlight that colour is a very important visual element of the architecture of this building and it is also an important design feature of seaside buildings. Very careful proposals will be generated for the appropriate painting of the facades of this building, in keeping with its design and heritage.

The 3D recording of the building and the work to draw it up in Revit makes the survey into an extremely valuable tool in terms of the development of the building design. It was always envisaged that some of the recent and poor quality extensions, particularly on the south side of the building, would need to be removed. The CAD model allows us to show in great detail, the impact of demolishing parts of the building to reveal the hidden facades and the massing of the building that will be revealed. It also allows us to illustrate the impact of adding windows back into elevations, where they had previously existed but where they had been lost to later alterations, additions and extensions. A package of these images is being used in the pre-app discussions and will form a part of the planning and LBC applications that are being prepared for the proposed works

10.00 - LIMITATIONS

The proposal is that this building is to be sensitively re-purposed to ensure its future. We believe that this proposal should not be controversial. In doing so, it will return to residential use; the purpose for which approximately half of the original building footprint was built. Such a conversion is considered entirely appropriate as it is fully in keeping with the history, design and heritage of the building so this should not be controversial either. The size, proportion and character of many of the rooms in the building is residential and its location in the town of Colwyn Bay together with its elevated position and connectivity with the town make it ideal for the proposed use. We therefore believe that the main issues for which we are seeking consent will be the scope of the proposed demolition. The details of any conversions and modern interventions and the external treatment of important details such as car parking.

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Image 01 - Existing South West elevation modelled by AGa

10.00 - LIMITATIONS

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02

Image 02 - Existing South East elevation modelled by AGa

Creative re-use inevitably means change and this can be a very sensitive and potentially controversial issue when considering historic and listed buildings. This building has served as a school so there are many people who will have connections with and fond memories of the building and the role that it played in their education and personal development or to that of their families and friends. In these circumstances, it is important that people can separate issues of history and architectural quality from pure sentimentality. The proposals are respectful of this history whilst also looking forward and aiming to give the building a new future. There is the possibility that there may be a resistance to change from some quarters but buildings like this need to be used and maintained to help to ensure their future sustainability.

In order to protect Rydal Penrhos from inappropriate change, it is protected by law in the following ways:

- Any alterations to the building will require Listed Building Consent because of its grade 2 listed status.
- Any changes of use for the building will also require Full Planning Consent as the building will no longer have an educational use and will revert to being residential.

Planning Consent will be subject to compulsory pre-application consultation and we heartily endorse the protection that this process will help to give to the re-purposed building. This stage is due to commence during the spring of 2021 and this heritage statement is provided to supplement information included within the pre application consultation package at the time of writing. Although the building has previously served as a school, ministry of food offices and a hotel, it was originally built for residential use and this is entirely in keeping with its design and location.

Depending on the nature of any proposed changes, there may be objections as noted above, particularly if they involve alterations to the building and its setting. However it should be noted that This building has already undergone many phases of change over its 199 year life and varied uses. The main changes that are proposed are the removal of poor quality and inappropriate additions and extensions that have disfigured the original building and that compromise its future re-use. Careful stripping away of these additions will reveal the quality of the building.



Image 01 - 3D North view of existing building as modelled by AGa

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10.00 - LIMITATIONS

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Public consultation will be an important component of any proposal for changes that affect the future of this building. Consultation with CADW may also be needed to consider changes that might have an impact on the historical integrity of the original architecture.

A careful assessment of the component parts of the building will be needed when considering re-use as it was built in a number of phases and the proposed conversion will need to make sense of the way that these are linked. For example, the earliest (1821) part of the building has a separate stair and vertical circulation arrangement to the later 1886 hotel extension. Our proposals are planned around the original vertical circulation areas in the building but making allowance for these areas to be upgraded to meet current means of escape regulations and with the addition of a lift to improve accessibility for residents or visitors that may have physical impairments. Internal re-planning of the building has been kept to a minimum where possible. The rooms on the front of the building benefit from views over the town of Colwyn Bay and over the Iris sea but these rooms are north facing. The majority of rooms on the south side of the building have views onto the wooded hillside at the back of the building but the windows are generally smaller as these rooms were originally the service areas of the former house and hotel. The aim is to create apartments that gain maximum benefit from their orientation and their location in the building.

The proposed housing development of the parkland setting has been designed to retain a generous swathe of open landscape around Rydal Penrhos and this will ensure that the key views of the building remain. As with any residential development, there will be a need to provide parking for residents at a manageable ratio of parking spaces to apartments so a layout has been prepared that groups the parking around the perimeter of the building. The proposal is to minimize the potential for parking to dominate the building but inevitably at certain times cars will have a visual impact on the setting of the building,

As a part of the project, we acknowledge that there may be a need for;

- Further detailed historical research, recording or archaeological investigation
- Further surveys on condition, structural and environmental performance and ecology and careful recording of the outcomes. For example, we understand that a building of this nature may

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Image 01 - 3D West view of existing building as modelled by AGa

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have spaces in it that are inhabited by protected species such as bats

- A method statement for repairs or demolition. This will be partly dependent on approval being granted on the proposed scope of demolition.

Details of protection to be given to special features during work.

11.00 - DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Our proposals have been formulated to ensure that the changes that are proposed at Rydal Penrhos can be carefully managed. The aim is to deliver a sensitive conversion of the building in a manner that will conserve and enhance the historic fabric of the building whilst giving it a secure and sustainable future. The proposal is not a cheap or easy solution to the conservation of this building but is a genuine attempt to ensure that it can have a long-term future that equally acknowledges its significant past. Its past role as a school means that it has played a part in the personal development of many people and is remembered with fondness by some. The proposed conversion of the building will inevitably lead to some changes that will be needed to bring the building into line with modern regulations that deal with the thermal and acoustic performance of the building, means of escape and fire precautions.

The proposals will require planning consent for a change of use and in the context of this document, will require Listed Building Consent for the scope of the changes that are proposed.

The building has an important history related to the development of Colwyn Bay as a resort town. It was clearly sited to benefit from the sea views and later on, these same views over the rooftops of the growing town made it ideal to serve as a hotel. It then served as a school for nearly 70 years but presumably was difficult to use and expensive to maintain for educational use and so the site and building are now to be re-developed.

The current proposal is to creatively re-purpose the building by returning it back into residential use; the purpose for which it was first designed and built. We believe that this is an entirely appropriate way of ensuring



Image 01 - 3D East view of existing building as modelled by AGa

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11.00 - DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

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an appropriate future for an historic and listed building whilst protecting the main architectural elements of the building that made it a candidate for listing in the first place. The Listed Building description notes that the well preserved interiors in the building are one of the reasons that it was considered as a suitable candidate for listing. The design team understands that any proposals to convert the building must, where possible, preserve and enhance these details in situ. The strategy for protecting these will form a part of the listed building consent submission

The following principals have influenced the development of design proposals for the conversion of this building:

- The hierarchy of spaces in the building is clearly identifiable and is a part of the history of the development of the building. The grandest entertaining and public spaces are at ground floor level with the most expensive guest accommodation above. Servant's quarters are in the lower grade rear extensions and in the loft spaces. The size of rooms and their configuration influences the ways that they can be sub-divided or combined and so the apartment plans are carefully laid out to maximise the benefits that can be gained from following the original plans of the building.
- There are currently two main stairs in the building and they are not linked by the main circulation spaces. This arrangement will be retained. Once again, current standards and regulations will have an important part to play in how this will be achieved.
- The main rooms are all on the front of the building, where the views over Colwyn Bay are best. The main rooms in apartments will follow this principle.
- Some of the largest entertaining spaces are very difficult to subdivide. Features such as mouldings, panelling and screens are a very important part of the architectural composition of these rooms and so the proposals keep these rooms in their original configuration. This means that a small number of ground floor rooms will be very large and spacious as apartments but it also means that the building will be protected and that the history will remain legible.

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Image 01 - 3D East view of existing building showing parts to be demolished as modelled by AGa

11.00 - DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

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- Much of the rear elevation faces south and had views into and over the parkland on this side of the building. These views were lost from many rooms when successive service wings were added to the building in a manner that created an enclosed courtyard space. The proposal is that some of the later additions will be removed to recreate the former south facing façade and in the process, reopen the sunny aspect of the building. This will enhance the quality of the apartments for residents whilst also revealing more of the historic envelope of the building.

12.00 - DESIGN APPROACH

Our proposals are illustrated in the drawings that accompany our application for pre-application consultation and that will form a part of our listed building consent and planning applications.

The current proposals, if approved will mark a new phase in the life of Rydal Penrhos. The configuration of the rooms in the former house and the later hotel wing are domestic in scale and layout but with some very grand spaces which are large by modern standards but which make attractive living spaces. Smaller rooms are ideal as bedrooms and ancillary spaces and corridors make good hallways and bathrooms. The original layout was designed to face the views over Colwyn Bay and this principle will be continued in the proposed layout. Many of the main rooms face north but some have panoramic bay windows that give views in a number of directions. In general, it is these feature rooms that help to define the special aspects of the location of this building and why it will make very special, high quality and characterful accommodation.

The original 1821 house is four storeys in height with a full basement below although the headroom at basement level is quite restricted and there is no proposal to use the basements for anything. The basements will not be infilled and an access stair will be formed to allow them to be periodically inspected. The new accommodation will be on the ground, first and second floor levels. With access from the location of the existing stair if not the actual staircase itself. The house has a four storey turret that forms the centrepiece of the main elevation over the front door and the small room on the Third floor will become a feature bedroom with access via a spiral staircase.



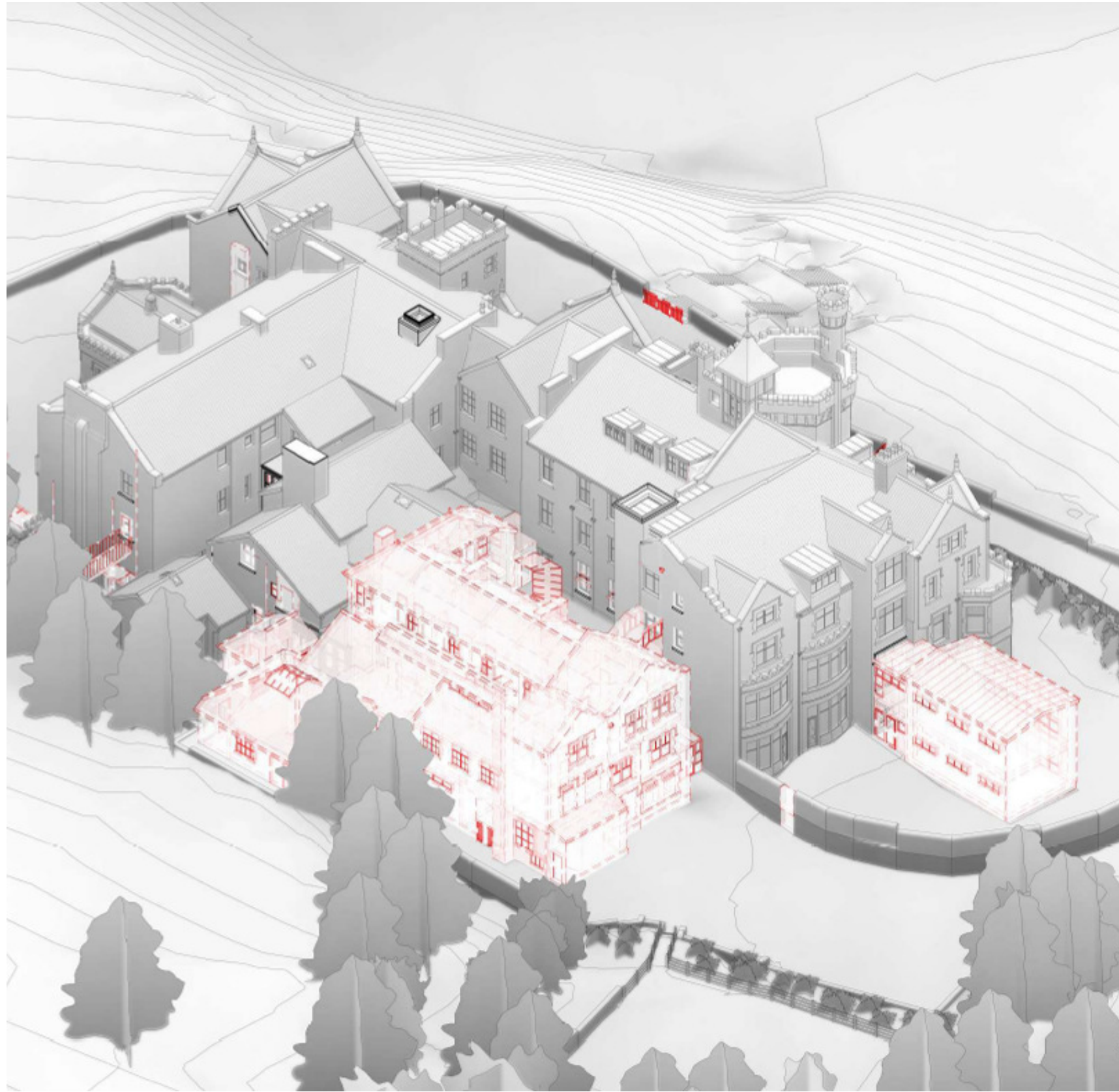
Image 01 - 3D South view of existing building as modelled by AGa

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12.00 - DESIGN APPROACH

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The hotel wing has four storeys of accommodation. Some of the rooms in the top floor are very characterful because they are partly under the slope of the roof and they have generous dormer windows and sloping ceilings. The "Penthouse" flat in this wing has access onto a sheltered section of roof, which will be utilised as a roof terrace.

The aim is to gain the maximum amenity for the residents of the new flats from the built form and configuration of the building and from the main architectural features of the rooms. In order to convert a building like this into flats, it is necessary to consider the fire compartmentation of the dwellings and the travel distances that are permissible for residents that might have to escape from a fire in the building.

13.00 - BUILDING CONDITION

The building appears to have been well used and well maintained throughout its period of use as a school. It is a large and complex building which incorporates a number of phases of construction and different periods. The roof in particular is designed with many hidden valleys, abutments and rainwater outlets, many of which are potential weaknesses where water may get in. It is a complex building in an exposed location so good maintenance has been an important part of the reason that the building has survived so well.

As previously mentioned, Rydal Penrhos is a complex grade 2 listed building. The earliest part of the current building was started in 1821. The proposals will hopefully revive and resurrect it that it can celebrate its bi-centenary in 2021. Some of the interiors look very grand and architecturally sophisticated but this makes the conversion a real challenge that is technically difficult and highly specialist to achieve. CADW notes that some of the interior detail is a reason for the building being worthy of listing.

Part of the challenge for the design team has been the need to retain and upgrade architectural features that in their original form will fall short of the regulations for fire compartmentation and safe means of escape. These details will need to be sensitively upgraded to satisfy the conservation and safety requirements of the new project. The construction works that are proposed may uncover hidden defects as well as poor construction and detailing that will need to be carefully addressed in the conversion. Subdividing some of the larger formal

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Image 01 - 3D South view of existing building showing parts to be demolished as modelled by AGa

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spaces in the building will be a real challenge without compromising their architectural quality. A careful overall strategy for the conversion is set out in this document.

At the time of writing, the facades of the building have been painted in a brilliant white masonry paint, which gives the appearance of the building a very stark and clinical appearance. The use of white paint overall has also disguised some of the architectural detail of the elevations, particularly in terms of window surrounds, quoining and string courses. Some of these details create shadows and are therefore fairly easy to read but others are far more subtle and they are visually lost because of the monochrome treatment of the building. Old photographs tend to always be in B&W so colours are very difficult to judge but a few things can be surmised from them as follows:

- The very stark white is a modern addition to the building and it would appear that in the past, it was painted in a subtle shade of grey or off white.
- Victorian and Edwardian paint schemes used contrasting darker colours to pick out the key features of the architecture of the facades. Notably sills, string courses, quoining and dripstones helped to give modelling to the elevations.
- This level of expression is missing in the current colour scheme and could be carefully replicated in future.

The roughcast render is a relatively common feature of the local North Wales vernacular. It would probably have been a grey colour when originally applied and there is no clear evidence about when the building was first painted. Masonry paint on render is also common in North Wales and in towns like Colwyn Bay, traditional seaside pastel shades were and still are commonly used. The stone quoins and string courses may originally have remained un-painted. There were many quarries operating along this stretch of the North Wales coast so it is likely that the stone is local in origin but the heavy coating of paint makes it very difficult to be more exact although quarrying and slate mining were important sources of employment and wealth in this area throughout the C19th and this is clearly expressed in the materials used in buildings throughout this era..



Image 01 - 3D North view of proposed building as modelled by AGa

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13.00 - BUILDING CONDITION

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14.00 - SIGNIFICANCE

Whilst heavily altered and adapted over its life, Pwllcrochan House is still an interesting example of a small, provincial country house of the Regency Period. It has simple Gothic Revival detailing and pseudo vernacular details that reflect its location in North Wales.

Its location may have been chosen as a catalyst for the proposals to develop the resort of Colwyn Bay.

Its adaptation and extension to become a hotel was probably influenced by the increasing popularity of the town after the arrival of the railway and the ease of travel in the Victorian era. The interior of the building is a significant survivor, bearing in mind the range of uses and users that the building has accommodated.

A notable survivor in this building is the interiors of the principal rooms. Many interiors date back to around 1890 and are part of the conversion of the building into a hotel. These interiors are noted as being one of the reasons why the building has been listed

Rydal Penrhos is a large landmark building. It has a significant place in the townscape of Colwyn Bay and the current proposals will not change that. It is over 70 years since this building last operated as a hotel so there will be relatively few people remaining who remember this phase of its life but after that, the building became a boarding school and over a period in excess of 60 years, many people will have visited the building as pupils, parents, staff members and other visitors. Whether people loved or hated their school years, this impressive building will have made its mark on the development of many people and this undoubtedly gives it a great significance in their lives. The good state of repair of the building is perhaps a reflection of the affection that many alumni held for the building as much of the interior is remarkably un-molested and it is this completeness that will be conserved and enhanced in the conversion of the building into apartments.

15.00 - PROPOSALS FOR CHANGE

Re-using buildings with this sort of architectural presence and sense of history is a challenge. Some of the rooms in the building are very large; a legacy of their use as a school and the temptation is therefore to sub-

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Image 01 - 3D East view of proposed building as modelled by AGa

14.00 - SIGNIFICANCE

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divide them in order to boost the density of the development. Our design proposal acknowledges this hierarchy of rooms and were possible, the main spaces in the building are retained and enhanced without subdivision. This was a key factor in the decision to develop 34 apartments in the building. In planning this conversion, there has been some adjustment of the internal layout of the vertical circulation so that lifts can be included to serve all floor levels from the basement up.

16.00 - ACCESS STATEMENT

The building occupies a sloping site. There is a basement plus four main floor levels to the front part of the building. There are steps and / or ramps at each of the main points of access into the building. Access upgrades will be undertaken throughout the building, including the provision of modern lifts. It is anticipated that these changes can be made without significant visual impact on the building. In particular, some of the ramped arrangements at entrances will be replaced in a manner that is n=more sensitive to the design of the original buildings.

17.00 - THE CONSTRUCTION (DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT) REGULATIONS (CDM)

Under the CDM regulations, the client will have a legal duty to appoint a Principal Designer CDM to assess competence and to draw up preliminary Health and Safety plans prior to any construction works being carried out. Failure to do this can constitute a criminal offence. Work to existing buildings can pose particular and special areas of risk that must be carefully considered in the preparation of proposals for the conversion and conservation of the building. Specialist materials and workmanship techniques may demand particular working methods and PPE on the design and construction team and these need to be factored into the proposals. All members of the project team including the planning and conservation authorities need to understand the impact that these things may have on the project.

NOTE:

Nothing in this report is intended to be taken as a criticism of any individual, organization or contractor. The report is intended to be read as a constructive document that identifies existing and potential uses



Image 01 - 3D South view of proposed building as modelled by AGa

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16.00 - ACCESS STATEMENT / 17.00 - THE CDM REGULATIONS

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for the building and sets out a possible strategy for the protection and re-use of this grade 2 listed building.

18.00 - CONCLUSION

Buildings like Rydal Penrhos can be difficult to re-purpose. Unfortunately, they can be vulnerable to theft, vandalism or worse if they are left vacant for any length of time. The proposals that are brought forward here are aimed at protecting an important Heritage Asset in the town of Colwyn Bay and in the process, allowing a former residential building to return to a use that is appropriate to its form and design. We believe that this proposed conversion will help to secure the future of the building and to conserve the most important physical evidence of its past. The completed conversion will create high quality, characterful residential properties that help to save a part of Colwyn Bay's heritage whilst helping to meet housing need.

Alfred J. R. Plant. RIBA CA

February 2021

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Image 01 - 3D West view of proposed building as modelled by AGa

18.00 - CONCLUSIONS

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