

The importance of architectural conservation in Wales: to what extent has this effort been successful in Porthcawl?

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Abstract

The importance of architectural conservation in Wales: to what extent has this effort been successful in Porthcawl?

by Gwion Llyr Nicholls

University of South Wales, Trinity Saint David

This dissertation examines the significance of architectural conservation in Wales, focusing on the success of conservation efforts in the town of Porthcawl. Through a comprehensive analysis of literature, case studies, and research, the study evaluates the effectiveness of conservation initiatives in preserving Porthcawl's architectural heritage and its impact on the community.

The research explores the historical context of architectural conservation in Wales, highlighting the role of Cadw and setting the organisation alongside its equivalent body in England and Scotland. The research examines the legislative framework and listing system that protects historically significant buildings.

Using Porthcawl as a case study, the study investigates conservation projects at the Jennings Warehouse, The Links, and Porthcawl Museum, assessing their success in preserving historical integrity, promoting community engagement, and fostering sustainable development. These case studies provide valuable insights into different aspects of conservation, showcasing the multifaceted nature of preserving architectural heritage and its impact on the local community.

Key individuals were interviewed as part of this study, including local conservation architects and representatives from all three of the selected case studies. All these professionals shared their perspectives on balancing preservation with adaptive reuse, engaging stakeholders, and achieving sustainable outcomes which formed success.

The study employs qualitative and quantitative methods, including interviews, questionnaires, and research analysis. It explores the perceptions and experiences of the local community, uncovering the social, cultural, and economic impact of architectural conservation in Wales, and Porthcawl.

The findings contribute to a nuanced understanding of the success of architectural conservation in Porthcawl and Wales. The research identifies achievements, challenges, and areas for improvement in conservation efforts, offering recommendations to enhance future conservation projects.

Ultimately, this dissertation emphasises the importance of successful architectural conservation in preserving Porthcawl's historical identity, promoting community pride, sustainable development, and cultural heritage. By evaluating conservation success in Porthcawl, the study informs future conservation efforts in Wales, facilitating the continued preservation of architectural heritage for future generations.

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I am also grateful to the conservation architect professionals, Geraint Roberts, Ashley Davies, and Robert Freeman, professionals, who generously shared their time and knowledge for interviews and discussions. Their first-hand insights have enriched the research and provided valuable perspectives on the success of architectural conservation in Wales, and the core values and processes behind conservation projects.

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of Georgia Sullivan, and Paul Joseph, who helped provide thorough site visits, surveys and interviews, providing an in-person view inside the developments, and a variety of unpublished building specifics and construction information. Their willingness to engage in discussions and provide a wealth of information, and valuable input has been pivotal in evaluating the success of the case studies and understanding the community's perception of conservation efforts in Porthcawl.

I am sincerely grateful to everyone who has contributed to this research in various ways. Your support and collaboration have been crucial to the completion of this dissertation.

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Introduction

Porthcawl offers a compelling case study for examining conservation efforts in the region, with a rich architectural heritage, and a diverse range of buildings and structures that reflect different periods and styles. From historic cottages and Victorian villas to iconic landmarks and industrial buildings, Porthcawl presents a varied built environment that demands attention and preservation. Exploring the conservation challenges and successes within this context provides valuable insights into the complexities of architectural conservation.

As a seaside town, Porthcawl attracts a significant influx of visitors, making preserving and enhancing its architectural heritage essential for maintaining its appeal and identity. The delicate balance between catering to the needs of residents, tourists, and businesses while safeguarding the town's heritage creates an intriguing subject of investigation.

The presence of ongoing conservation projects in Porthcawl offers an opportunity to assess the effectiveness of preservation initiatives, as an active redevelopment area for Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC), there are extensive plans for Porthcawl's future.



Figure 30: Esplanade and Grand Pavilion

(Credit: Porthcawl Museum Archives)

The local community's involvement and perception of conservation efforts in Porthcawl make it an excellent case study for exploring the social and cultural dimensions of architectural preservation, understanding the community's attachment to their built environment, their values, and their engagement in conservation initiatives adds depth to the study and highlights the importance of community-driven approaches to successful conservation. Porthcawl's experiences and lessons learned can inform and inspire conservation practices in other Welsh towns and cities facing similar challenges, and knowledge gained from studying Porthcawl's conservation efforts can be shared and utilised to promote sustainable and effective preservation strategies throughout Wales.



Figure 31: The Promenade, Porthcawl

(Credit: Porthcawl Museum Archives)

Aims and Objectives

The three main aims of this dissertation are to:

- Explore examples of successful conservation projects across Wales
- Understand the importance of the conservation of architectural heritage
- Understand the framework of policies and organisations involved in the conservation process

The dissertation will address the following objectives:

- What makes successful conservation architecture?
- What purpose do such projects serve?
- What is the relationship between heritage and architecture?

- What makes a structure worthy of conserving? What dictates its historical relevance?
- What are the conservation policies in Wales and what significance do they hold for conservation?

Methodology

For the research of this dissertation, I engaged in three different approaches:

1. Detailed library/ documentary research
2. Interviews with key individuals
3. Site visits to each case study

1. Detailed library/ documentary research

In preparation for the dissertation, sources such as “Journal of Architectural Conservation”, accessed through the UWTSD Library, were used to gain an understanding of the underpinning principles of conservation. Initial research for the dissertation involved exploring governmental organizations such as CADW and studying conservation policies in Wales to understand the regulatory framework and guidelines shaping conservation efforts.

2. Interviews with key individuals

Key people were interviewed as part of the research for this dissertation and these included Welsh Conservation Architects, Geraint Roberts, and Ashley Davies, the owners of two RIBA-registered practices.

Furthermore, representatives from each of the case studies were interviewed:

Paul Joseph, chairman of The Porthcawl Museum provided a deep evaluation of the history of the Old police station; lead project manager for The Jennings development, Robert Freeman offered an insight into the decision-making process for a historic building; and Georgia Sullivan, senior project manager at Acorn Property Group shared information about the requirement to balance preservation with adaptive reuse.

3. Site visits to each case study

Site visits to each of the case studies selected for this dissertation proved to be most helpful as there was an opportunity to observe the building in use, and experience the space first-hand. The visits included journeys to The Porthcawl Museum, The Jennings Building and The Links in Rest Bay, Porthcawl.

Definition of architectural conservation

Architectural conservation is the practice of preserving and protecting buildings, structures, and other physical artefacts of cultural heritage. It aims to safeguard these historic and cultural landmarks for future generations, maintaining their historical, architectural, and cultural significance (Cadw, 2011). Architectural conservation includes a range of disciplines such as architectural history, materials science, engineering, and cultural heritage management, and it requires a multidisciplinary approach to ensure that the conservation is effective, sustainable, and respectful of the building's history and cultural significance (Cadw, 2023).

Definition of successful architectural conservation

The success of architectural conservation projects depends on a range of factors, including thorough planning and research, sustainable preservation, community engagement, adaptation and reuse, and partnerships and collaboration. A successful conservation project begins with a deep understanding of the historical and cultural significance of the building or structure being conserved, as well as an awareness of the materials and techniques that will ensure its long-lasting preservation (Drury, (2019). Engaging with local communities and stakeholders is also essential to fostering a sense of ownership and pride in the building, as well as ensuring that the conservation efforts meet the needs of the community.

While discussing the core principles of successful conservation work, conservation architect Ashley Davies, spoke on the importance of redeveloping the function of historical buildings, to accommodate modern needs, saying “I would suggest that the core aim of my projects, are to not only preserve the architectural history of a structure, but to ensure its use and current purpose to the community, rather than preserving a historical site to be preserved and looked at” (Davies, 2023). Furthermore, a successful conservation project requires

innovation and creativity in adapting historic buildings to new uses, while remaining sensitive to their historic fabric and design.

Successful architectural conservation can be defined by its ability to preserve, restore, and repurpose historical sites in ways that involve transforming these sites into culturally and socially relevant spaces that engage the public and contribute to the community. Success is achieved by revitalising the sites economically, attracting investment and creating job opportunities, and is also about promoting sustainable development by making use of existing resources and preserving collective memory (Taher Tolou Del, 2020).

The context of conservation in the UK

The UK has a long and rich history of architectural conservation, with various organizations and agencies dedicated to preserving and protecting historic buildings and structures. In Wales, Cadw¹, meaning in Welsh "to keep" or "to protect", is responsible for the conservation and management of Wales's built heritage, and also maintains the register of listed buildings and ancient monuments. Funding for Cadw's activities primarily comes from the Welsh Government's budget, and from stakeholders, such as local authorities, heritage organizations, and community groups, to ensure collaborative and inclusive approaches to heritage conservation (Cadw, 2019).

The National Trust also plays a crucial role in the conservation of historic buildings and landscapes, with a focus on those that are open to the public.

In England, English Heritage is responsible for the conservation of England's historic built environment, by maintaining the National Heritage List for England, which includes listed buildings, scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens, and other heritage assets (English Heritage, 2023).

Historic Environment Scotland is the equivalent organization in Scotland, responsible for the protection and promotion of Scotland's historic environment (Jonathan, 2014), and the listing system in Scotland.

¹ Established in 1984, Cadw manages and cares for over 130 historic sites and monuments across Wales, including castles, historic houses, industrial sites, and archaeological remains, representing the rich and diverse cultural heritage of the country.

Spotlight on Cadw

Cadw's primary responsibilities² involve the preservation, interpretation, and promotion of Wales' historic environment, to protect and conserve, ensuring its long-term sustainability. This involves overseeing conservation projects, conducting research, and providing expert advice and guidance to site owners, custodians, and local authorities.

Cadw has created a set of core Conservation Principles, providing a comprehensive framework that guides the understanding, application, and management of all conservation projects in Wales. The Principles are of utmost importance as they underpin Cadw's core efforts to preserve and protect the cultural and historical significance of Wales' built heritage (Cadw, 2011a). At the heart of these Conservation Principles lies a deep appreciation for the historical significance of each site or building and through extensive research, surveys, and assessments, Cadw strives to gain a profound understanding of the architectural, historical, and social context of sites (Cadw, 2023). This ensures that conservation efforts are targeted, informed, and aligned with the unique characteristics and values of each heritage asset. Preserving the physical fabric of historic buildings and sites is a fundamental principle, by recognising the importance of retaining original materials, structures, and features to the greatest extent possible, Cadw ensures the authenticity and integrity of the historic fabric, enabling present and future generations to experience a tangible connection with the past.

Applying the Principles, Cadw emphasises consideration of any interventions or alterations to historic buildings or sites with great care³. However, it also stresses the necessity of managing change in a way that is compatible with the cultural and historical significance of the place, minimizing any adverse impact on its integrity.

From the initial assessments and planning stages to the actual implementation of conservation works, the Conservation Principles inform and shape the decision-making processes, and ensure that their efforts are grounded in a comprehensive understanding of the site's significance and that any interventions are carried out with respect, sensitivity, and expertise (Cadw, 2023).

² In addition to conservation, Cadw is committed to enhancing public access and understanding of Wales' heritage, providing educational resources, organising events, and guided tours to engage visitors and gain an appreciation for the cultural and historical importance of the sites.

³ The Conservation Principle acknowledges that these structures are living entities that need to adapt to meet the evolving needs of society (Cadw, 2023)

The Listing System for historic buildings in the UK

The listing system is a cornerstone of architectural conservation in the UK, providing legal protection for buildings of architectural or historic interest. The listing system aims to identify and safeguard buildings that possess special architectural, historical, or cultural significance (English Heritage, 2022). The listing process involves expert assessment of a building's architectural and historic value, considering factors such as age, rarity, design, and cultural associations. Buildings that meet the criteria are assigned a grade, which determines the level of protection and restrictions placed on them⁴. Grade I listed buildings are of exceptional interest, often of national or international importance, Grade II* and Grade II listed buildings are of special interest, representing significant examples of architecture and heritage (British Listed Buildings, 2023).

The UK's conservation efforts extend beyond the listing system to encompass various building types:

- Churches⁵, for example, receive particular attention due to their historical, architectural, and community significance.
- Castles and stately homes are also important focal points for conservation, often requiring significant restoration and maintenance efforts to safeguard their architectural and historical narratives (Tinniswood, 2011).
- Industrial buildings, such as mills, warehouses, and factories, represent a distinct aspect of the UK's heritage, with many being repurposed for modern uses, emphasizing adaptive reuse as a sustainable approach to conservation. By converting industrial buildings into residential, commercial, or cultural spaces, their historical value is preserved while contributing to the revitalization of urban areas.
- Public buildings, including town halls, libraries, and civic centres, play a crucial role in the social and cultural life of communities, their conservation efforts focus on preserving their architectural significance, restoring original features, and adapting spaces to accommodate contemporary functions (Roberts, 2023).

⁴ Listing grants legal protection, preventing unauthorized alteration or demolition and ensuring that any changes made to the building are carried out with care and consideration for its historic fabric, Listing also raises public awareness and appreciation of the country's architectural heritage, encouraging a sense of pride and identity.

⁵ Restoration and repair work on churches aims to preserve their unique features, including stained glass windows, timberwork, and decorative elements while ensuring their ongoing use for worship and community activities.

The UK's conservation efforts benefit from a strong legislative framework, dedicated funding, and a robust network of professionals and organizations specialising in architectural conservation, for a range of conservation projects, enabling the UK to maintain and showcase its architectural heritage as an invaluable cultural asset.

Introduction of the selected case studies

Examining specific case studies within the town, such as the Jennings Warehouse, The Links, and Porthcawl Museum, delve into the practical aspects of architectural conservation, including design interventions, restoration techniques, and community engagement, to evaluate the outcomes and challenges of these projects, to provide valuable lessons for future conservation projects.

- Porthcawl Museum serves as a significant case study as it highlights the importance of preserving and showcasing the town's history and cultural heritage.
- By repurposing the Jennings Warehouse, it breathes new life into the structure while preserving its architectural integrity, and showcases how the conservation of a building can contribute to the social fabric of the community by providing a gathering place, fostering a sense of identity, and supporting local businesses.
- The Links project with its focus on the preservation and enhancement of the coastal landscape and recreational facilities, highlights the importance of conserving natural and built environments harmoniously.

Collectively, these case studies demonstrate the diverse approaches to conservation and the positive outcomes that can be achieved when historical and cultural heritage are preserved and integrated into the fabric of a community. They highlight the importance of community engagement, sustainable development, and adaptive reuse in successful conservation efforts. Through these examples, we gain a deeper understanding of the challenges, opportunities, and best practices in preserving architectural heritage in Wales, particularly in the town of Porthcawl.

Literature review

A range of academic works have been used throughout this dissertation, gathered from various online governmental sources, as well as the UWTSD library.

Key works include:

Nick Lee Evans' "An Introduction to Architectural Conservation" provided a comprehensive overview of conservation's philosophical, legislative, and practical aspects, offering a solid foundation for understanding the subject.

The "Journal of Architectural Conservation", by Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, provided numerous valuable sources of scholarly articles, such as Dean Hawkes' Architecture and Climate, presenting an insight into field of architectural conservation.

The RIBA "Conservation Handbook" proved to be a practical and informative resource, offering guidance on conservation practices, techniques, and case studies.

Cadw's "Conservation Principles" publication played a vital role in the research by providing specific guidance on the sustainable management of the historic environment in Wales, aligning with the focus of the dissertation.

Chapter 1: The Old Police Station

History

The Old Police Station in Porthcawl, located on John Street, was built in 1881 in the Victorian Gothic Revival style. The building was designed by local architect John Prichard⁶ and originally served as the headquarters for the Porthcawl Police Force and magistrates' court until its closure in 1998. John Prichard was a prominent architect who worked in the South Wales region during the late 19th century, who designed a wide variety of building, including public, commercial, and private residences. He was particularly known for his work with police stations, town halls, and civic structures (Ellis, 1959).



Figure 32: Porthcawl Police 1914

(Credit: Peoples Collection Wales)

The ground floor of the building was used as the police station, with offices, cells, and living quarters for the police officers. The upper floor was used as a courthouse, where cases were heard and sentences were handed. Throughout its history, the police station saw many changes, reflecting the changing needs of the town and the police force. In the early 20th century, the building was extended to accommodate a new police station and living quarters

⁶ Cowbridge-born architect John Prichard (1817-1886) was influenced by AW Pugin and designed mostly in the neo-Gothic style.

for the police officers, and in the 1920s, the building was modernized with the addition of new technology, such as telephones and a radio system (Newman, 2004).

During World War II, the police station played an important role in the defence of the town, as it was used as a base for the local air raid warden service and officers helped to enforce blackout regulations and maintain order in Porthcawl. Interestingly, the cells of the police station were used to hold prisoners of war who had been captured by the Allies (Joseph, 2023). In the 1950s, the police station was the site of a major criminal trial that received national attention, when three men were accused of robbing Porthcawl Bank, and the trial lasted for several weeks. (Porthcawl Museum, 2023).



Figure 33: Porthcawl Museum

(Credit: Porthcawl Museum and Art Society)

After the war, the police station continued to serve the community, until the 1960s.

Population growth in Porthcawl required a greater number of large holding cells, so plans were made to build a new police station. The new station was built elsewhere in the town, and the old police station was closed in 1968 (Newman, 2004). After the police station was closed, the building was used for various purposes, including as a community centre, public library and youth club (Porthcawl Museum 2023). It is now repurposed and open to the public as The Porthcawl Museum, but its original features, such as the cell block and courtroom, have been preserved, and used as historical artefacts. The old police station is a significant part of Porthcawl's architectural and cultural heritage, and it is an important reminder of the town's history.

Materiality and Construction

The building has two storeys and was constructed using red brick with sandstone dressings, which is roughly coursed and dressed with smooth, bevelled edges. The sandstone was used for the window surrounds, cornices, and quoins, and was quarried from a site near Newton, just a few miles east of Porthcawl (Porthcawl museum 2023). The design of the building is typical of a Victorian police station s, with a central block featuring a symmetrical façade featuring a central entrance with a pointed arch doorway, flanked by two bay windows with pointed arch openings (British Listed Buildings, 1998).

The windows are set in shallow, arched recesses with carved hood moulds, which are decorated with carved details, such as leaf motifs and human faces. The central block has a projecting entrance bay with a pitched roof and a pointed arch door with decorative stone carvings. The wings of the building are gabled and have a distinctive stepped design with decorative brickwork. The roof is covered with local slate, and has a steep pitch with brick chimney stacks, which is typical of the Gothic Revival style (British Listed Buildings, 1998). The building also features some decorative detailing, such as the diaper work on the upper storey of the entrance bay and the decorative carving of the town's coat of arms above the entrance. Inside the building, the courtroom and the cell block have been preserved and are an important reminder of the building's former use (Joseph, 2023).



Figure 34: Old Police Station Porthcawl

(Credit: Peoples Collection Wales)

Conservation Area

The historic buildings on John Street feature a range of architectural styles and details, including decorative stonework, arched entrances, and ornate window surrounds. While some of the buildings have undergone alterations over the years, their façades still reflect their original architectural character and contribute to the unique character of Porthcawl. John Street in Porthcawl is a Conservation Area for BCBC, designated in 1971. The Conservation Area covers a significant part of the town centre, including John Street and the adjacent streets, up to the Listed building Porthcawl Pavilion⁷. (Porthcawl Civic Trust Society, 2015). The purpose of the Conservation Area is to protect and enhance the historic and architectural character of the area, and to ensure that any new development or changes to existing buildings are carried out in a way that is sympathetic to the area's character and heritage. As such, any proposed developments within the Conservation Area are subject to additional planning regulations and guidelines to ensure they are in keeping with the character of the area (Bridgend County Borough Council, 2004).



Figure 35: Porthcawl Hotel, John Street circa. 1900

(Credit: Porthcawl Museum archives)

The late 19th century public toilets in John Street are a Grade II listed building and are directly adjacent to the Old Police Station. Originally used as public conveniences for visitors

⁷ The Grand Pavilion is another notable building in John Street on the Porthcawl seafront, which was built in 1932 by E J E Moore and serves as a venue for concerts, theatre productions, and other events. The building is a Grade II listed Art Deco structure and features a distinctive curved facade with a central tower (British Listed Buildings, 1998).

and locals, the toilets are a unique example of Victorian architecture that feature ornate cast iron work, decorative tiles, and stained-glass windows. The interior of the toilets includes a series of individual cubicles, each with a porcelain toilet and sink, and original features such as the original wooden doors and Victorian-style floor tiles (British Listed Buildings, 1998). In recent years, the toilets were refurbished and restored to their original Victorian-era design, preserving the historic features and architecture of the building. Still in use today, the toilets are open to the public free of charge.

Redevelopment in the 21st century.

The Old Police Station was listed as a Grade II Listed Building in 1989, and amended in 1998, recognised for its historic and architectural significance and it remains a reminder of the town's past as a bustling Victorian seaside resort and the important role that the police force played in the community (British Listed Buildings, 1998). The building has undergone several restoration projects to preserve its original features, including repairs to original holding cells, and installation of new windows to match the original design (Coflein, 2021). Ongoing maintenance and repair efforts were carried out to ensure the building remained in good condition, as well as installing better heating and electrical systems (Porthcawl Museum, 2023).



Figure 36: Porthcawl Museum

(Credit: Porthcawl Museum and Art Society)

After the police station was closed, the building was converted into a museum, which opened to the public in 2001. The proposed conversion was initially controversial, as some local residents felt that the historic building should have been preserved for public use

(Bolter, 2014). However, the conversion was approved by the Porthcawl Town Council and the building was restored to preserve its history and to serve a new purpose to the community. Renamed Porthcawl Museum, the building is dedicated to preserving and showcasing the history of the town and its people. The museum is run by the Porthcawl Museum Society, which is a voluntary organisation that is committed to preserving the heritage of Porthcawl. The building has been adapted to accommodate its new function as a museum, with internal changes including the installation of display cases and the removal of some of the internal walls to create larger exhibition spaces, for features such as interactive exhibits, including a coal mine simulator.



Figure 37: Porthcawl Museum Display

(Credit: Porthcawl Museum website)

The museum has acquired almost 8,000 artefacts through donations and loans throughout the years, including artefacts, photographs, documents and audio-visual materials, that illustrate the history of Porthcawl and the surrounding area (Porthcawl Chamber of Trade, 2023). The exhibits cover a range of themes, including local industry, maritime history, and the development of the town as a popular holiday destination. The museum also features a library, which contains a range of local history books and documents that are available for research purposes. In addition, the museum runs regular events and activities, such as talks, workshops and exhibitions, that are designed to engage the local community and promote an interest in local history (Porthcawl Museum, 2023). The National Museum of Wales, of which the Museum is an Associate Member since achieving

Full Accreditation Status through Cymal⁸ (Welsh Government, 2013) in 2009, diligently records and catalogues this richness of artefacts. Accreditation benefits include loaning or sharing items with other museums to enrich exhibits, and the museum can seek for grants from Cymal and CADW (Porthcawl Chamber of Trade, 2023).

The Old Police Station has thus become an important historical and architectural landmark in Porthcawl, reflecting the town's Victorian heritage and its links to law enforcement. As a listed building and museum, it plays an important role in the cultural and social life of the area, providing a focal point for community events and attracting tourists to the town. The museum's exhibits also contribute to the preservation of the town's history and the promotion of its cultural heritage.

There are no immediate plans for major developments to the museum, however, there have been discussions about expanding the museum's exhibition space and introducing new exhibits to attract more visitors. The development of the Porthcawl police station into the Porthcawl Museum has been beneficial to the community in several ways. It has helped to preserve local history, become a cultural attraction for both locals and tourists, engaged the community through programs and events, and provided an educational resource for local schools and community groups (Bolter, 2017). Furthermore, the museum offer volunteer opportunities for those interested in preserving and promoting local history, or wish to contribute to the preservation of local history through cultural enrichment, community engagement and education.



Figure 38: Porthcawl Museum Community Project

(Credit: Porthcawl Museum website)

⁸ Cymal is a Welsh Government funded programme, designed in two phases from 2009 to 2011, to support and fund libraries and museums in Wales. The programme has worked alongside Cadw, to protect and fund these facilities to remain open, and updated for public use (Welsh Government, 2013).

Chapter 2: The Jennings Warehouse

History

The Jennings Warehouse or “Warehouse of the Llynfi Iron Company”, as it was called originally, was designed and built in 1832 by James Allen, at a total cost of £60,000, funded by, and for the Dyffryn Llynfi and Porthcawl Railway Company. The warehouse was used as a store room for coal and iron ready to be transported from the Porthcawl harbour to (predominantly) Maesteg and Tondy (Newman, 2004). The harbour originally served as a coastal terminus of an 1828 horse-drawn tramway that supplied the growing coal and iron industry in the mid-Glamorgan valleys, under the Act of Parliament of 1825 (British Listed Buildings, 1998).

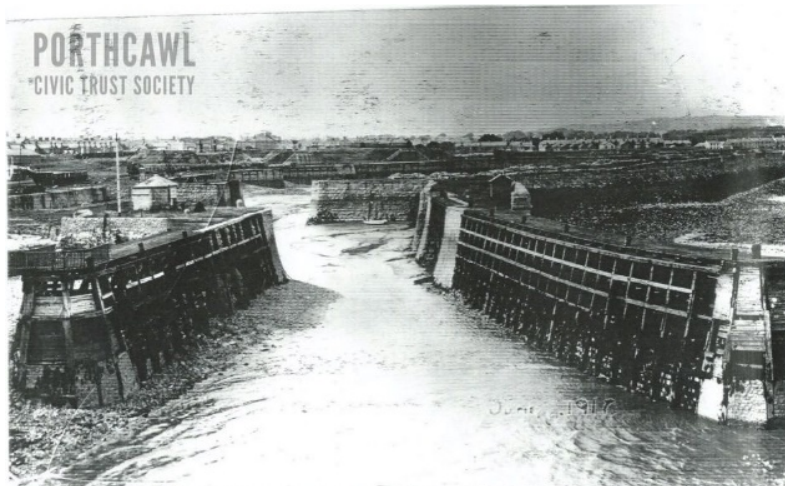


Figure 39: Porthcawl Docks

(Credit: Porthcawl Civic Trust Society)

In 1947, the transportation of goods via Porthcawl's train line ended after being replaced with larger lines connecting Swansea and Cardiff to the rest of Britain. Porthcawl's original Train Lines were then used as transportation for local miners' families, when Porthcawl started making the transition from an industrial town, to an economy of tourism and holiday makers, bringing a new wave of culture and purpose to the town (Newman, 2004). At the time the 'Warehouse of the Llynfi Iron Company' was larger than most warehouse units, with the hope of providing storage for the industrial growth of Porthcawl, which was expected to expand in the future. The scale and design of the warehouse was crucial to protect goods during harsh weather conditions, as it stands along the edge of rocks overlooking the water. Transportation from the docks ended in 1906, resulting in the warehouse being used for long term storage, and the docks being used by the general public and local fishers.



Figure 40: Porthcawl Cosy Corner site

(Credit: Porthcawl Civic Trust Society)

The name “Jennings” originates from 1911 when the warehouse was used by Jennings and Co, a timber importing company, who used the warehouse for storing timber awaiting sale, throughout the winter seasons (Newman, 2004). Jennings and Co closed for business in 1918, at the end of the First World War, leaving the site to be bought by Great Western Railway (GWR), as a site to be preserved for historical significance.

In the 1920's, Jennings was passed ownership from GWR, and was sold to local property developer Michael Shanly. Shanly developed the surrounding site into what became known as “Cosy Corner”, named after the first development on the site, a cinema and drinking bar (Porthcawl Civic Trust Society, 2015). The site held a variety of amusement facilities, with a cinema converted from an aeroplane hangar, indoor and outdoor roller-skating rinks and hosting a variety of social events in the summers (British Listed Buildings, 1998).



Figure 12: Porthcawl Cosy Corner site

(Credit: Porthcawl Civic Trust Society)

The former, smaller dock used originally for transporting goods was converted into a natural salt pool for public swimming and small boats. The onset of the Second World War closed the site down, and the warehouse and boating slipway became a base for the RAF Air Sea Rescue service in 1939 (in use until 1959). From 1965 the Jennings Warehouse was used by the RNLI for housing equipment, before an official Lifeboat station on the slipway, was commissioned in 1996.



Figure 13: Porthcawl Cosy Corner site

(Credit: Porthcawl Civic Trust Society)

The Jennings Warehouse was listed as a Grade Two building in August 1998. The building is listed for its historical importance with South Wales' iron industry and is a rare example of an early railway company warehouse, with mainly original features, which originated with the harbour, alongside the Old Customs House, and the Lookout Tower. The Jennings warehouse was then converted into a small indoor skateboard park until 2011 when it closed to the public and was abandoned. A range of proposals was envisaged for the redevelopment of the building, none of which came to fruition because of numerous funding issues with previous developers (Wales Online, 2015). This meant that the site was behind scaffold, supporting the derelict features, since 2013.

Materiality and Construction

The Jennings Warehouse is a large two-story maritime unit, with a pitched roof and a mezzanine first floor. The exterior was originally constructed from limestone rubble dressed with a mixture of stone and brick but over the years the building has undergone restoration

to certain areas of the structure, and concrete has been used as a replacement material (Freeman, 2023). At the ground floor, facing the harbour, there are six square-topped windows along with three large arched openings, used as the former loading bays. Along the first floor, are regularly spaced, arched windows, with cambered arched heads, and dressed stone sills and surrounds (Ellis Williams Architects, 2018). The south face of the warehouse, facing the pier and slipway, has a double-story height arched opening, once used with large wooden doors. The roof features Welsh slate and terracotta tiles for the ridges and skylights were added in the late 1990s into numerous places on the roof, creating the possibility for more natural light. The floor was originally constructed from stoned and timber, but is said by Newman, to have been levelled and poured with polished concrete (Newman, 2004), along with added steel reinforcing the roof and an added mezzanine for storing, and fixing equipment when occupied by the RAF during the second World War.



Figure 41: The Jennings Warehouse

(Credit: Loft.co)

Conservation Area

The Jennings Warehouse is located within the Porthcawl Conservation Area, which categorizes the warehouse, harbour, original tidal basin and breakwater, and lighthouse as features with historical importance and are to follow the Porthcawl Conservation Area Designation Report (Bridgend County Borough Council, 2004). The buildings within the

Conservation Area were completed from the late 1700s to the 1900s, and are dedicated as part of Porthcawl's core period of industrial development.

The Local Planning Authority's (LPA) of Bridgend County Borough Council's (BCBC) recommendations identified a number of historical design components within the building that were designated "Key External Considerations"⁹ in order to conserve historical traits while aligning with the LPA. In addition to the listed status of the building, the warehouse is located inside the Porthcawl Conservation Area, which implies a statutory requirement for any future construction projects will only be given permission if they protect or enhance the character of the Conservation Area.



Figure 42: Jennings Warehouse Porthcawl

(Credit: Ellis Williams Architects)

Porthcawl Regeneration Plan

The Jennings Warehouse is a part of the Porthcawl Waterfront Regeneration plan, which is an outline plan to regenerate over 100 acres of land on the South Wales coast (Planning Development Brief, 2013.) The Regeneration plan, aims to create a lively new centre that will

⁹The Key External Considerations were as follows:

- To retain the form, structure and materials of the existing roof including the roof lights as these are of significant interest. The decorative features, such as hip tiles, should be retained and repaired as necessary. The introduction of roof ventilators is not appropriate as they will detract from the appearance of the prominent roof slopes.
- To retain the remaining important chimney stacks, even if no longer in use, as they form part of the original structure and contribute to the roofscape.
- To retain the original exposed facing materials with which the building was constructed. Re-cladding in general and any re-rendering will not normally be permitted, except where rendering currently exists.

help the town and the surrounding area in social, economic, and environmental ways. The regeneration builds on the plan for Porthcawl, which is to turn the key waterfront promenade into a seaside resort for tourism, with ideas for housing, recreation, shopping, and community services.

The building of a new, high-quality promenade with cast concrete dividers, benches and landscaping, between the harbour and Trecco Bay completed construction by as of August 2022 (Gogarty, 2022) and a new Aldi supermarket development, began on site on the grounds of the Salt Lake car park, adjacent to the promenade both show action towards the Regeneration Plan. In addition to these developments, numerous schemes are within the BCBC planning process, such as a £6.4m proposal to protect Porthcawl from potential sea rising and flooding (Farr, 2022), and a proposal for the redevelopment of 20 hectares of land within the Amusement park of Sandy Bay beach. Which intends to build 900 homes, alongside retail, commercial, and leisure amenities along the coastline, following the aims of the Regeneration Plan. This proposal has raised a degree of controversy with some opposition to the development of the site, with local Councillor and Cabinet Member for Regeneration Neelo Farr¹⁰, saying; “The proposed appropriation represents an exciting and important step in unlocking the potential of the waterfront area and forms an essential part of our ongoing overall regeneration plans”, whereas Porthcawl Town Council member, Brian Jones¹¹ commented that “There’s a lot of space here and I want to make sure it is used properly for something that benefits all the people of Porthcawl”. It is important to note that Farr and Jones are likely to have opposing views about the regeneration of Porthcawl: any member of Bridgend County Borough Council such as Farr, would be drawn to opportunities relating to revenue and economic benefits for the community, whereas Jones, a Town Council Member would have a closer connection to the historical fabric, and thus an interest to preserve character.

The Harbour Quarter is one of the Development Brief's most important character sections, and envisions a revitalised harbour quarter surrounded by high-quality buildings that incorporate the Conservation Area's historical features to create a leisure and tourism destination. Since 2012, the dock basin has undergone a £3.4m renovation including: a new lock gate, pedestrian footbridge, and pontoon system, allowing for twice the amount of mooring spaces, and increasing accessibility (Planning Development Brief, 2013). The

¹⁰ Neelo Farr, Labour party Cabinet Member of Regeneration for Bridgend County Borough Council, was elected in 2017 for 3 years.

¹¹ Brian Jones has been an elected member of the Porthcawl Town Council since 2016

Jennings project was the first major development in the Regeneration Plan, which has directly benefitted the local community. The function and placement of The Jennings development, is aimed to directly reflect the effort of the Regeneration Plan, paired with newly constructed docks, to draw in tourism.

Redevelopment in the 21st century

The location of the site is ideal for development, with views across to the English coast, along with its close proximity to the town and surrounding harbour, producing a combination of local qualities that are unique not just in the perspective of Welsh seaside towns, but also within the UK. The Jennings warehouse is one of the few remaining dockside structures, from the 19th century, in Britain (British Listed Buildings, 1998).

The main aim of the brief given to BCBC, by Ellis Williams Architects, was to conserve and enhance the derelict warehouse to regenerate the site with a mixed-use building, providing revenue and leisure for the community (Freeman, 2023).



Figure 43: The Jennings Warehouse

(Credit: Loft.co)

The development of Jennings Warehouse was encouraged by Bridgend Council, as it forms a large economic and social contribution to Porthcawl's waterfront and not only protects the historical heritage of the site, but sets a benchmark for the aims of the LDP. Throughout the design and development process, the design team at Ellis Williams Architects, met with local community groups, Porthcawl Town Council, and BCBC officials, CADW, and the RNLI to understand the building's objectives and the specific design requirements in order to abide by the Development Brief (Ellis Williams Architects, 2018).



Figure 44: Jennings building Porthcawl

(Credit: Tetra Tech)

The warehouse was converted to its current design by DS Properties and Ellis Williams Architects in 2017, at a cost of £2.5m funded by BCBC, Welsh property developers ABA Holdings with support from Porthcawl Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI). Built beside the harbour and slipway, it is easily recognizable in its surrounding landscape and has brought regeneration into the town (Ellis Williams Architects, 2018). The completed scheme has won a number of awards for restoration and redevelopment, such as the 2018 RICS¹² Regeneration Award, and the BCBC 12th annual LABC Building Excellence Awards, in the Best Small Commercial Building, and Best Partnership Scheme categories. Additionally, the warehouse was nominated for the RTPI¹³ Excellence in Planning for Heritage and Culture (BCBC, 2018).

The location and positioning of the units within the warehouse have also been designed so that the rear dining areas of each restaurant have a sea view just above sea level, offering a seamless view of the Bristol Channel when seated, lessening the divide to nature. The restaurants and cafes are housed alongside each other, each one views an exterior balcony-style eating area. These include the busy and successful Double Zero Pizzeria, The Harbour Bar, Coffi Co and Esplanade café, which not only bring back life and revenue to the building and pier area of the seafront, but also offer employment for local workers, and provide a beacon for leisure and revenue for the community.

¹² Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors

¹³ Royal Town Planning Institute



Figure 45: The Jennings Warehouse

(Credit: Loft.co)

The repurposing of the internal space complements the external sitting areas, as well as the surrounding context to create a pleasant internal quality. The structure incorporates openings that once would have been used as a viewpoint to the sea and working doorways to the slipway, into spaces for friends and family to gather for entertainment and leisure. The units housed within the warehouse, incorporate and extenuate the original features with a high level of interior design and quality to preserve character while staying modern. In particular, the Harbour Bar restaurant, which occupies the biggest unit on the south side, has a very distinct aesthetic, with heavy steel beams, steel and dark leather furniture, and natural dark stained oak floorboards, inspired by, and reflecting the history of the building (Freeman, 2023). The large stone opening once used as the main entrance for the warehouse, were retained, and extenuated into a large curtain wall, looking out onto the slipway and harbour, and drawing in sunlight through the dining space. The surrounding interior walls are lined with various historical photographs, documentation, and artworks, depicting the past use of the warehouse. Along the upper floor, between the newly built trusses, are 13 loft live-work residential units, each with a mezzanine floor bedroom and views out towards the sea (Ellis Williams Architects, 2019).



Figure 46: The Jennings Warehouse

(Credit: Loft.co)



Figure 47: Jennings building Porthcawl

(Credit: Tetra Tech)

The construction and re-development of the warehouse was approached carefully, with attention to original materials, to retain the original structure and design aspects such as arched openings, stonework, roof design, and other aesthetical characteristics while enhancing aspects that extenuate the language of the building. A part of the brief given to Ellis Williams Architects, was to enhance the building energy efficiency, by using various aspects of sustainable design, through collaborating with Tetra Tech Europe, to ensure the achievement of a higher level of efficiency (Tetra Tech, 2023). The pitched roof has been re-

constructed with timber, to the exact original layout, with a high level of insulation, along with re-strengthening and additional insulation along the interior side of all walls. The first-floor residential units are predominantly naturally ventilated, with the proximity to the pitched roof, and newly constructed party walls, creating easily heated efficient double height spaces. The previous un insulated roof lights have been replaced with an identical aesthetic modern counterpart, but with high energy performing design and materials, providing the warehouse with the same historical character, but with much better efficiency and weatherproofing (Freeman, 2023).

Chapter 3: The Rest Convalescent Home

History

The main building of The Rest Hotel, formerly a convalescent home, was designed by local architect John Prichard in 1874, after having the cliffside site donated by the Talbot family of Margam, following the Public Health Act of 1848. Economic downturns and volatility in the late 19th century coal and iron trade led to a funding shortfall throughout the construction of the Rest, delaying the project's schedule. Instead, a staged strategy was used to ensure that the main building, could be completed by 1874. Following that, between 1891 and 1893, an inflow of cash made it possible to install the G F Lambert¹⁴ designed, left wing and water tower. Another local architect, Cardiff-born E M Bruce Vaughan¹⁵ designed the rear left and right wings, which were built in 1900. The Rest eventually assumed the form it was intended when first designed, in 1909 (Thomas, 1987). The design and construction were funded by the Porthcawl, Llynfi and Dyffryn coal and iron industries as a way to solve the growing issue of injured and ill coal miners and industry workers, giving the building its original name, The Rest (Newman, 2004).



Figure 48: The Rest, Porthcawl

(Credit: Peoples Collection Wales)

¹⁴ George Fenton Lambert (1842/3-1926)

¹⁵ Edwin Montgomery Bruce Vaughan (1856– 919) won the Architectural Association medal in 1880, before designing over 45 churches in Glamorgan in the Early English Gothic style, as well as schools, public libraries and hospitals in Cardiff, Aberystwyth and Llanelli.

Before the opening of The Rest, three small cottages at the eastern end of New Road Porthcawl, served as the first, and only medical convalescent of its kind in Glamorgan, to deal with a growing number of patients in need of support. These cottages still exist and are now private residential homes. When it opened in 1862, the 'Rest for Invalids, Convalescents and Scrofulous Patients' was a totally unique institution in Glamorgan (Newman, 2004).

Between its launch in 1863 until the opening of the new Rest Home in 1878, the Old Rest Cottages proved demonstrably inadequate to meet the extensive health and welfare needs of workers within the Glamorgan catchment area (Thomas, 1987). Poverty and excesses of the first Industrial Revolution in south Wales inspired the Public Health Act (1848). By the mid-19th century in the south Wales coalfield and industrial area, unregulated iron, coal, and other heavy industries, demographic changes, and rapid population growth caused major public health issues (Public Health in Wales, 1800–2000, 2005). Overcrowding, poor quality housing, and unsanitary circumstances in urban centres aggravated the situation in the county of Glamorgan, which had a wave of illness and disease. As a result, cholera and typhus outbreaks were common, and diseases like smallpox and scarlet fever were widespread throughout south Wales (Porthcawl Civic Trust Society, 2015).

The desperate need for more medical services in the Glamorgan area, forced local developers to invest in the development of a new convalescence home, seven years after the opening of the three Old Rest cottages, the planning and construction of the Rest began in 1869. The location of the new convalescent home, was influenced by the number of patients with alcohol addiction related illnesses and was said to be “sufficiently removed from public houses to avoid the temptations of intoxicating liquor!” (Thomas 1987). Wealthy Victorian landowners, philanthropists, and industrialists supported the concept of a larger, purpose-built convalescent home. The health reformer and founder of modern nursing Florence Nightingale (1820-1910), who was involved in the planning of an innovative public health improvement, also supported the development of the Rest, as it was seen as a dedicated facility for the sick or injured to rehabilitate and benefit from fresh sea air, for the hardworking people of the industries that were essential to the economic growth of Glamorgan and South Wales. The Rest was originally established as a convalescent home for the benefit of Glamorgan's working people from 1877 until 1914, and throughout the First World War, and its admittance lists show that its clients came from a wide range of occupations. Given the Rest's proximity to the south Wales coalfields, it is not a surprise that the majority of its patients arrived from devastating mining injuries, and people suffering with lung disease. The first former patients to arrive at The Rest, were survivors of the Ty

Newydd Colliery disaster¹⁶ in 1877. The Rest served as accommodation for Belgian refugees and a billet for the Royal Army Medical Corps in 1914-1915, a field hospital for soldiers from 1916-1918, before returning to public use for local patients, in 1919 (Newman 2004). By the early 1900s, most colliery firms, trade union lodges, and other groups paid annual payments towards 'passes' for the healthcare of their workers. These passes permitted adults and children to stay for one or two weeks to recover from accident or illness. The Rest also served as an Auxiliary War Hospital and billeting for soldiers in 1939 during the Second World War, before returning for public use seven years later.



Figure 49: The Links restored listed wing

(Credit: G. Nicholls)

Since the opening of The Rest in 1978, the numbers of patients admitted for care each year, increased drastically, raising from only 33 patients in the first year, to 3,156 in 1938 (Disability and Industrial Society, 2010), yet it is important to note, that the increase of patients per year, would also be due to patients staying under care for shorter periods. Following the establishment of the Welfare State in 1947, the Rest operated as an independent charitable organization, providing a wide range of services from hotel rooms, to a wedding and social venue. The pattern of social needs had changed significantly since 1862, and the Rest reacted to those evolving requirements by becoming a charity Trust in 1983, serving as a private care home and apartment accommodation for the elderly

¹⁶ The disaster occurred when water from a nearby closed colliery flooded the Newydd Colliery in Porth and 14 miners became trapped, of which five died.

(Newman, 2004). In 2013, insufficient funding was available for the redevelopment and maintenance of the listed building, which forced the Rest convalescent home to close.

Gunnery dome

During WWII, a large concrete gunnery dome was built along the grassy cliff in front of The Rest, one of twenty domes built around Wales to train anti-aircraft gunners. The dome was used as training facilities for gunners and new soldiers by RAF Stormy Down, a local Air Force affiliated military training group. Similar domes at Lagham and Pembrey were 20ft in diameter, whilst the dome at The Rest was 44ft in diameter to handle both training and research projects. The Dome was demolished and rebuilt at Coney Beach funfair in Porthcawl after the war, when it was utilised for different forms of entertainment, including a cinema. The Dome has been relocated to RAF Mona Anglesey since the 1970's (Acorn Property Group, 2017). The Rest was listed as a Grade II building in February 1998, for its history and contribution to the welfare of south Wales, but also as an example of the work of key local architects, alongside many other listed structures in Glamorgan. The Rest has a strong historical relevance for Porthcawl, as a lasting example of historic architecture, with decorative features and original furnishings (British Listed Buildings, 1998), which provides an insight into Porthcawl of the past. Acorn Property Group's development work revealed old dedication plaques (Acorn Property Group, 2018), patient records, historical photographs and various other artefacts, which were donated to the Porthcawl Museum for display to the public (Acorn Property Group, 2017).



Figure 50: The Rest gunnery dome

(Credit: G. Nicholls)

Materiality and Construction



Figure 24: The Links front façade

(Credit: G. Nicholls)

The front facade of the Rest faces the sea and Rest Bay, and given its exposure, it was designed to endure the elements of the Bristol Channel. As a result, the architectural design was complex, incorporating projecting buttresses, overhanging eaves, and the lining of external walls with brick to prevent the likelihood of water penetration, all of which contributed to the building's unique, multi-layered appearance (Newman, 2004), yet Newman describes the building as a “monstrous Swiss chalet”, which is “unfeeling and nightmarish” (2004). The Rest's winged chalet type design reflects its Victorian beginnings, and the aim of the design to withstand the constant harsh weathering from the coast. The three-story centre section consists of two double-bay gabled cross wings and a central two-bay recessed section with unusually broad eaves. Side wings have deep overhanging eaves with triple struts at 45° angles that spring from corbels on each side of a central pier that extends to the full height of the structure and increases in depth through offsets, designed to withstand the loads of the wind. The rest has fifty fireplaces, to ensure warmth and effective heating, and to keep damp out of the structure, with tall rectangular chimneys with terracotta pots and overflying courses, most of which have been preserved to be decorative if not used functionally (Cadw, 1998). The exterior walls consist of coursed red rock faced sandstone, with red and blue brick with ashlar masonry on some walls. The roof is dressed with quality Welsh slate, with groups of tall octagonal stacks on the ridges, linking the aesthetic with the landscape and local materials. The exterior design is grand and has design a similarity to Georgian and Victorian architecture with vertical pillars, and the placement of windows and their mullions.



Figure 25: The Links reconstructed original staircase

(Credit: G. Nicholls)

The front of The Rest faces the main town area of Porthcawl and out to sea, making the views of Porthcawl's beaches visible through the grand windows. Because of its size, the imposing building dominates the skyline and surrounding landscape. Perhaps to the injured miners, the building was a symbolism of wealth, a façade of empathy and accountability. Sited facing the town could indicate that the architect wanted to reinforce the idea of responsibility and pride of the Talbot family for the wealth responsible for Porthcawl's economic growth.

Redevelopment in the 21st century

The site was purchased by Acorn Property Group in 2016, for an estimated cost of £4m with planning granted by BCBC, for the retention of original features, and to develop the site into 71 residential apartments. The brief of the development, was to preserve and enhance the original structure to its previous condition to repurpose the spaces for residential use, with the addition of a newly constructed apartment block, in a contrasting yet complimentary modern aesthetic. Acorn Property Group is an independent development and regeneration specialist that have worked on a variety of new build and conservation focused residential projects, and had bought the site, due to its rich history, open landscape for large development space, located in a prime location for luxury residential units. The redeveloped structure was named The Links, as reference to the projects aim of linking modern design

and construction, with a listed structure, linking the historical and modern aesthetics while enhancing the function of the site within the community (Acord Property Group, 2021). According to the Links Housing Brochure, “The design of the new build element makes architectural reference to the historic building and creates a sensitive contrast between old and new”. The Links development made many headlines locally, and won Best Residential Development at the Cardiff Property Awards in 2021 (Media clash, 2023).



Figure 26: The Links Development

(Credit: Acorn Property Group)

Phase one of the development was completed within the original structure to provide 35 self-contained residences consisting of studios, one, two, and three-bedroom apartments, opening out onto the common, with a sea view. Phase two included a further 36 one, two, and three-bedroom new apartment builds, with a contrasting modern aesthetic. The collection of new-build apartments were built to incorporate the rear of the listed structure, creating an inner courtyard, with seated areas, lighted access pathways, and landscaping. The new apartments overlook extensive green space across to the Kenfig dunes, and each has private access to the landscaped courtyard, with kitchens that open out to a small garden. The apartments showcase a range of layouts depending on views, but each has a private outside space in the form of a balcony or terrace, high specification underfloor heating, modern Leight and bosch kitchen units, with the option of furniture packages for interiors designed by interior design practise, Clayton & Company, who have over forty years of experience (Ridout, 2021).



Figure 51: The Links apartment original opening and a newly built kitchen

(Credit: G.Nicholls)



Figure 28: The Links worn original timber

(Credit: G. Nicholls)

Acorn's initial development work included removing modern modifications to showcase the original structure and characteristics such as entrances, arches, exposed beams, and tiling, dating from the original construction. Throughout the old structure, heritage features such as intricate detailing, original doors, roof trusses, and purlins have been restored and uncovered, where previously built over, to enhance the character of each apartment (Coflein, 2016).

Original timber staircases have been repaired and strengthened in areas, with all core materials used, constructed sensitively to preserve the original decorative cast iron balusters, and thick worn timber, even where arching and slight cracking has occurred. (Sullivan, 2023). The units along the site's front include old arched openings and ornamental skirtings, which were all covered and painted before the redevelopment work to preserve the

original elements. Roof voids have been used where possible, along with mezzanine level accommodation and roof glazing, to create dramatic double-height rooms. Large window openings have been preserved to the original dimensions and exterior aesthetic but painted white on the interior to compliment the modern style (Acorn Property Group, 2017). The large windows facing out to sea, frame the view, and creates a light filled space within each apartment, ensuring the most is made of the prime location (Clements, 2020).



Figure 29: The Links residents entrance

(Credit: G. Nicholls)

Conclusion

The success of the case study analysis

After examining the redevelopment of the Old Police Station into the Porthcawl Museum and evaluating its success as a conservation project, it is clear that the project has been highly beneficial for the local community and has effectively preserved the building's historical and architectural significance. The transformation of the Old Police Station not only saved the building from deterioration but has also given it a new lease of life as a cultural hub for the local community, providing a unique and engaging space to learn about the history and culture of Porthcawl and Glamorgan. Through its carefully curated exhibits, the museum offers visitors an opportunity to explore the town's rich heritage. The restoration of key features such as the prison cells, has helped to retain the character, and architectural and historical integrity of the building while making it fit for its new purpose. The building's unique features have been successfully incorporated into the design of the museum, and the result is a harmonious and balanced integration of the old and the new.

The work at the Old Police Station has been a successful conservation effort, preserving the building's historical and architectural significance while being an excellent example of how the redevelopment of a historical building can not only preserve its heritage but also provide a unique and engaging space for the local community. However, it is important to note that the success of this project is also due to the commitment of the local community and stakeholders. The community support for the museum and the ongoing efforts to maintain and develop the building are a testament to the success of the project (Porthcawl Chamber of Trade, 2023). The project is a model for how the restoration and adaptive reuse of a historical building can create a valuable cultural asset for the community, and ensure the preservation of our cultural heritage for future generations.

The redevelopment of The Rest convalescent home into The Links housing development required significant investment, expertise, and planning to ensure that the building's historic character was preserved. This work included the repair and restoration of the original architectural features, and the addition of modern amenities and facilities to make the building a desirable place to live. One of the main benefits of the redevelopment is that it has preserved an important part of the area's heritage, The Rest has a long history dating back to the mid-19th and has since been an iconic landmark on the Porthcawl seafront. The development has brought new life to a building that was previously underutilised and in need

of repair, and it has done so while maintaining the character of the original building. The redevelopment has also contributed to the local economy, providing employment opportunities and attracting new residents to the area. The successful outcome of the restoration work at The Rest demonstrated the importance of careful planning and attention to detail in conservation projects while accepting the adaptation of new design, rather than restricting the redevelopment and adaptation of historic structures. The success of the project also highlights the potential for other historic buildings to be restored and repurposed in a similar way, ensuring that they continue to play an important role in the community for generations to come.

The redevelopment of the Jennings Warehouse is a further example of a successful architectural conservation project, and adaptation for modern uses, with the vibrant café and retail space that has since become a popular attraction for visitors and locals. The conservation work carried out during the project was extensive and involved the careful restoration of the building's exterior and interior, as well as the addition of new features and facilities that make the building a functional space for modern uses. The redevelopment of the Jennings Warehouse is an excellent example of the core purpose of conservation, its chosen interior design, combined with the enhancement of original features such as door openings and open trusses, showcase the building's heritage, and character, making the most of a historically rich site. The aim of conservation at this building is to preserve the cultural heritage of a place and to ensure that it remains relevant and accessible for future generations. By converting the warehouse into a café and retail space, Ellis Williams Architects has given the building a new lease of life, while also preserving its historic character. The building now serves as an important cultural and economic asset for the local community, promoting tourism, supporting local businesses, and employing the community of Porthcawl.

Conservation projects in Porthcawl are driven by a mix of historical preservation, social community benefits, and economic sustainability. The Porthcawl Museum showcases the area's cultural heritage and promotes education and tourism; the Jennings Warehouse is an adaptive reuse project that preserves the building's industrial history while providing social and economic benefits; and The Links redevelopment project revitalised a neglected area with sustainable development, providing new jobs, affordable housing, and attracting new businesses. These projects show how conservation efforts can be combined with sustainable development to create lasting benefits for the community.

In conclusion, therefore, it is crucial for the local council to prioritise preserving the area's cultural heritage while promoting sustainable and inclusive development that benefits the community.

The Future of Conservation for Wales

The future of conservation in Wales should focus on a comprehensive and sustainable approach that balances the preservation of our cultural heritage with the needs of modern society. To achieve this approach, there are several areas where improvements can be made, including legislation, funding, education, and community engagement.

Whilst there are laws in place to protect historic buildings and sites, there should also be more comprehensive legislation that considers the wider cultural, social, and environmental context. Such legislation would include the protection of industrial heritage sites, as well as more robust regulations for the reuse and adaptation of historic buildings, with an additional focus on redeveloping derelict buildings, even without Listed Building status.

The preservation and restoration of historic buildings and sites require significant financial resources, and there is a need for increased funding from both public and private sources to support conservation projects. Such investment could include incentives for private owners to preserve historic buildings and government grants and tax breaks to support conservation efforts.

There is also a need for greater awareness and appreciation of our cultural heritage, as well as educational programmes and training programs to develop the skills and knowledge required for conservation work. Universities in Wales that offer architectural qualifications should include project design modules that require the student to understand how to integrate new designs with historic architecture, to add emphasis on the importance of conservation, and bring new appeal to building reuse.

Community engagement is also critical, as this can help to build public support for conservation efforts and encourage local involvement in preserving historic sites and buildings, creating redevelopment projects that are in the public's best interest, and serving their needs.

The Future of Conservation for Porthcawl

Establishing the Porthcawl Conservation Area has been successful in preserving the town's historic buildings and sites while allowing for their sensitive reuse and adaptation to meet the needs of modern society. This approach by the local council has helped to maintain the character and identity of the town and has been instrumental in promoting its cultural heritage and attracting visitors. The Conservation Area has also contributed to the town's economic development by creating tourism, cultural events, and community engagement opportunities. This has, in turn, positively impacted local businesses and the wider community and has helped ensure the long-term sustainability of the town's economy.

The Porthcawl Regeneration Plan, developed by BCBC, aims to build on the success of the Conservation Area by promoting further redevelopment projects which support the sustainable growth and development of the town. The Plan includes activities to improve public areas, promote tourism, and encourage the development of new enterprises and residential buildings. Measures to improve sustainability and resilience are also included in the Plan, such as the development of green infrastructure, the promotion of sustainable transport, and the execution of flood risk management measures. These initiatives will help to ensure the town's long-term viability and support its continued growth and development. With many development projects in the pipeline, the council's ongoing efforts will have a long-term impact on the future of conservation for Porthcawl, as well as the integrity of Porthcawl's history.

The future of architectural conservation projects in Porthcawl should prioritise the preservation of the town's historic buildings and sites while promoting their sustainable reuse and adaptation for modern needs. It's important to focus on community engagement in the decision-making processes of conservation projects, The Porthcawl Museum for example, was successful in engaging the local community in preserving and showcasing the area's cultural heritage and giving back to the community, in the form of educational resources and activities for local schools, and the wider public. The community of Porthcawl influenced the design process of The Jennings, with local businesses able to create more opportunities for leisure, activity, and tourism, creating revenue which is fed back into the community. This community-driven approach can lead to greater support for conservation efforts and help ensure that projects align with community needs and aspirations. The Links redevelopment project was successful in regenerating the Rest Bay area, and creating housing opportunities.

Effective legislation and funding support is crucial for successful conservation efforts, the work of Cadw has been crucial in preserving and protecting the unique heritage of Wales, and Continued support for organizations like Cadw, as well as increased funding for conservation projects, can help ensure that Wales' cultural heritage is preserved for future generations. The Porthcawl Museum, Jennings Warehouse, and The Links are all examples of successful conservation efforts which have provided lasting benefits for their communities, and by recognising and learning from these successes, future conservation projects can be guided towards similar successes.

Discussions with conservation architects

As part of this dissertation, a number of discussions with conservation architects revealed an insight into the theory, aims, purposes, and values of conservation architecture. Through these conversations, the author understood how the architects approach each project, the challenges they face, and the various factors that influence their decision-making process.

Additionally, speaking with conservation architects allowed a deeper appreciation for the importance of preserving historical architecture and the impact it can have on the wider community. The architects were passionate about their work and demonstrated a strong commitment to sustainable and environmentally friendly practices, and emphasized the importance of balancing preservation with modern interventions, as this can help breathe new life into historical structures and make them more accessible to the public. These interviews provided a unique perspective on the purpose and success of architectural conservation and helped to form a more well-rounded understanding of the field, and form a personal opinion on what forms a successful conservation project.

The ethos of architectural conservation

The evolving modern ethos of architectural conservation recognizes the importance of preserving historical structures while also allowing for contemporary interventions to coexist. This approach seeks to create a balance between preserving the original structure's historical significance and ensuring it remains functional for modern-day use.

The future of conservation involves finding creative ways to repurpose buildings which meet current needs while preserving their historical character, this approach not only preserves the original building but also promotes sustainability by reducing the need for new construction. The process of adaptive reuse involves careful planning, collaboration, and a deep understanding of the building's history and significance, to combine a new design structure, to sensitively complement the old.

The evolving modern ethos of architectural conservation emphasises the need for the preservation, and redevelopment of historical architecture, the need for this shift lies in the sustainable and environmentally friendly practices of conserving and reusing existing architecture, as the world's population continues to grow, resources become scarce, and climate change worsens, it is more important than ever to prioritise sustainability in architecture and construction. Preserving historical architecture not only maintains our cultural heritage but also promotes economic and social benefits, in addition, incorporating modern interventions into historical structures can create innovative spaces that showcase unique design. The integration of new buildings with historical structures through sensitive and thoughtful design interventions has the potential to create sustainable and inspiring spaces, with enhanced connectivity to history, this approach ensures that historical architecture is preserved for future generations while still meeting the needs of modern society.

Therefore, it is essential that architects and conservationists continue to evolve the idea of architectural conservation to create a sustainable and environmentally friendly approach to preserving and redeveloping not only historical architecture but abandoned and derelict structures, this evolution will be critical to ensuring the preservation of cultural heritage while still promoting economic and social benefits for our communities.

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Interview with Geraint Roberts RIBA SCA, Architect & Historic Building Consultant, Geraint Roberts Associates, 25 January 2023

Interview with Robert Freeman, Client Design Advisor, Ellis Williams Architects, 27 January 2023

Interview with Ashley Davies RIBA SCA, Conservation Architect at Ashley Davies Architects Limited, 31 January 2023

Interview with Paul Joseph, owner and former chairman of Porthcawl Museum, 15 February 2023

Appendix A: Questions for Georgia Sullivan, Acorn Property Group

The following questions were asked during a site visit to The Rest at Rest Bay, Porthcawl CF36 3UP, to Georgia Sullivan, Senior Project Manager, Acorn Property Group.

The questions were devised by the author of this dissertation.

1. What was the state of the building when you came to work with it?
2. What were the key principles or features from the original structure that you wanted to conserve, or enhance?
3. Did the intended functions of each apartment within the space, influence the degree of original structure that was able to be kept?
4. What were the main challenges with the conservation aspect of the project?
5. What was your initial thought process and vision for The Rest? Did the outcome oversee your expectations?
6. What materials and processes were used in order to conserve the original structure? And was obtaining documents, plans, and accurate materials a challenge for the project?
7. Were you encouraged to, and did you in fact, apply for pre-application advice from the council? If you did apply, did you then have to amend the design?
8. Was there a community consultation for re-use of the building, and what did local people say about the development of the building?
9. Was there and client input into the design choices of any apartments? Was selling and the occupancy process fast due to high desirability?

Responses were received during the site meeting with Georgia Sullivan which was held on 23 January 2023.

Appendix B: Questions for Geraint Roberts RIBA SCA, Geraint Roberts Associates and Ashley Davies RIBA SCA, Ashley Davies Architects Limited

The following set of questions were asked, during two separate MS Teams conversations: one to Geraint Roberts RIBA SCA, Architect & Historic Building Consultant, Geraint Roberts Associates; and the second to Ashley Davies RIBA SCA, Conservation Architect at Ashley Davies Architects Limited.

The questions were devised by the author of this dissertation.

1. What makes a conservation project a success? What does this mean for your architectural work?
2. What do you consider the core principles of a conservation project?
3. What is your opinion on the importance of architectural conservation, as a whole, and for Wales?
4. What is the cultural importance of preserving architectural heritage? How does this contribute to your design and thought process in your works?
5. What are your views on the significance on precisely conserving original architecture, and repurposing historical structures with modern function? What is the relationship between historical and modern design in your projects?
6. What is your design approach for combining new architecture, within historical sites and listed buildings?
7. What is your view on contemporary style modern additions over/within historical structures? How important is conservation intervention to "save" a building?
8. In your opinion, what has been the impact of the RIBA Conservation Register and the architecture work delivered by those who are accredited under this scheme?

Responses were received during each MS Teams conversation, thus:

- Geraint Roberts RIBA SCA: 25 January 2023
- Ashley Davies RIBA SCA, 31 January 2023.

Appendix C: Questions for Robert Freeman, Ellis Williams Architects

The following questions were asked, during a MS Teams conversation, to Robert Freeman, Client Design Advisor, Ellis Williams Architects.

The questions were devised by the author of this dissertation.

1. What was the state of the Jennings Building when you came to work with it?
2. What were the key principles or features from the original structure that you wanted to conserve, or enhance?
3. Did the intended functions of each unit within the space, influence the degree of original structure that was able to be kept?
4. What were the main challenges with the conservation aspect of the project?
5. What was your initial thought process and vision for the Jennings Project? Did the outcome oversee your expectations?
6. What materials and processes were used in order to conserve the original structure? Was obtaining documents, plans, and accurate materials a challenge for the project?
7. Were you encouraged to, and did you in fact, apply for pre-application advice from the council? If you did apply, did you then have to amend the design?
8. Was there a community consultation for re-use of the building, and what did local people say about the development of the building?

Responses were received during MS Teams conversation with Robert Freeman which was held on 27 January 2023.

Appendix D: Questions for Paul Joseph, Porthcawl Museum

The following questions were asked during a site visit to The Rest at Rest Bay, Porthcawl CF36 3UP, to Georgia Sullivan, Senior Project Manager, Acorn Property Group.

The questions were devised by the author of this dissertation.

1. Do you have any information about the state of the building before the development work?
2. What were the key principles or features from the original structure that were conserved, or enhanced?
3. Did the intended functions of the display space, influence the degree of original structure that was able to be kept?
4. What were the main challenges with the conservation aspect of the project?
5. What materials and processes were used in order to conserve the original structure? And was obtaining documents, plans, and accurate materials a challenge for the project developers?
6. Was there a community consultation for re-use of the building, and what did local people say about the development of the building?

Responses were received during the site meeting with Paul Joseph which was held on 15 February 2023.