

Former Grove Park School granted Grade 2 listed status – AGAIN!

Mark Drakeford AM, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government, announced earlier today that he has reconsidered the decision to list the former Grove Park School for Girls in Wrexham. Having reviewed all the evidence presented, he concluded that the decision to list the building was the right one, and effective immediately, the building would once again, be granted Grade 2 Listed status.

The Cabinet Secretary stated “My decision is to list the building, with its historical dimension, on the ground of its special architectural interest due to its aesthetic visual quality, craftsmanship and decorative detail”.

Wrexham County Borough Council successfully challenged the previous decision, resulting in it being quashed by Judicial Review. The Welsh Assembly Government accepted that there was a lack of detail in the original listing decision. The latest statement gives a lot more background information into the reasoning behind this decision.

Elaine Guntrip-Thomas, chairperson of Save Our Heritage said “We knew the worth of this building all along. The reasons given to list the building are now documented for the public to see. We believe that we have been vindicated in our decision to campaign to save this important building. The next step will be to ensure the building is used to educate future generations.”

There has been considerable discussion regarding potential uses for the school building. However, as Wrexham Council approved Coleg Cambrias plans to convert the building just over a year ago, it's clearly possible to refurbish an older building to modern standards. There are already many examples of schools which have undergone this type of refurbishment around the country.

Georgina Gittins from the group added “Wrexham is second to bottom on the Heritage Index in Wales, with little opportunity for improvement, according to the Royal Society for Arts, who compiled the data. We hope to improve the towns heritage status by embracing what remains within the town centre area.”

Wrexham County Borough Council are currently preparing their Heritage Strategy document, which should be available for public consultation over the next few months. Alongside this policy, the group hopes that the Council draw up a Historic Environment Register, which allows members of the public to

suggest places or spaces that are of local interest, but may not meet traditional listing criteria.

Save Our Heritage now hope that the decision to list the building marks a turning point in the decline of Wrexhams built environment. People prefer to live and work in interesting places, and other local towns and cities do particularly well because of their interesting architecture.

Web Links:

Save Our Heritage Wrexham website - www.soh.wales

CADW - <http://cadw.gov.wales>

Wrexham County Borough Council - <http://wrexham.gov.uk>

About Save Our Heritage

The Save Our Heritage Group are non-political volunteers opposed to the destruction of older buildings which give the market town of Wrexham its character. Since forming in January 2016, they have concentrated their efforts on saving the former Grove Park School for Girls. Their website is at www.soh.wales .