

Heritage Impact Assessment

Beaumaris Castle, Visitor Centre Facilities
Internal Reordering and External Improvements



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Prepared by: Gethin Roberts
Checked by: Elinor Gray-Williams

Contact information

Gethin Roberts
gethin.roberts@insall-architects.co.uk
Tel: 01492 592378

Conwy Office

Donald Insall Associates
Y Becws, Pool Lane
Conwy LL32 8PZ
www.insall-architects.co.uk

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1. Introduction

Donald Insall Associates were appointed by Cadw to review the existing visitor facilities at Beaumaris Castle and develop a Heritage Impact Assessment along with a Planning and Listed Building Consent applications for the internal reordering of the existing visitor centre facility along with minor external alterations and access improvements. The building itself dates back to 2005 and sits against and within the outer boundary walls of the castle.

This Heritage Impact Assessment has been prepared in line with the current Cadw guidelines to support of the applications.

This report will demonstrate that these proposed improvements to the visitor centre facility will have no further impact on the character and historic setting of the site and the castle than existing building currently has.

2. The Project Objective

The proposed improvements to the visitor center facility is part of a wider £2.6m project to improve Cadw sites across Wales with the aim of attracting more visitors and further improving on-site experiences for visitors. New and upgraded accommodation and facilities designed to improve the visitor experience and enhance the historic setting. The proposal seeks to maintain the distinction between the Visitor Centre and the castle with minimal intervention.

The aspirations of this application are in conjunction with the wider vision for the site as described above. The main objectives of the project are to:

- provide improved visitor facilities and staff accommodation within the existing building,
- enhance visitor experience through reinstating a sense of arrival, and to
- strengthen the link between the Castle and the initial visitor entrance.

3. Understanding of Significance

The Castle is a Scheduled Monument Grade I Listed as an outstanding Edwardian mediaeval castle in Wales. It is an extremely well-preserved example of the colonisation and defence works carried out throughout the reign of King Edward I (1272-1307). The main gates and Victorian Gatehouse were listed in 2005, significantly, this was prior to the development of the new visitor entrance and shop. However, it is to be assumed that the structure (Visitor Centre), dating from 2007, is curtilage listed in relation to the gates, gatepiers, gatehouse (Ticket Office), boundary walls and railings. The current site of the visitor entrance is within the boundary of the World Heritage Site and well within the boundary of the wider essential setting.

"Included for the special historic interest of this prominent set of enclosure walls, gates and railings around this Grade I listed and scheduled monument", the site is currently just outside the arc of view for the significant views from the Castle.

The schedule below, which may be read in conjunction with Donald Insall drawing, CADWBC03-DR-1000, identifies the listed buildings on site and their listing descriptions appended to this report.

Cadw LB Number	Listing	Name	NGR	DIA Plan reference Number – CADWBC03-DR-1000
5574	I	Beaumaris Castle	SH 60718 76246	1
84771	II	Beaumaris Castle Visitor Centre	SH 60659 76170	2

A summary of the wider site significance has been outlined and assessed below under the criteria set out within the Cadw guidelines:

Evidential Significance

The standing monument provides a relatively intact example of preeminent military architecture from the 13th Century. This, coupled with comprehensive records detailing who worked on the Castle, how much it cost and where the workers came from build up a unique collection of evidence in to the history of the site. Beaumaris Castle has very high evidential significance.

Historic Significance

Both the communal and evidential significance combine to imbue the Castle with very high historic significance. The Castle provides a direct and engaging connection with the past. It represents the zenith in 13th Century military architecture. Beaumaris Castle has very high historic significance.

Aesthetic Significance

Along with Harlech Castle, Beaumaris represent a unique culmination of the double-wall concentric structure characteristic of late 13th Century military architecture. It represents state of the art military architecture and was designed to be both beautiful and intimidating. The standing ruin engenders a sense of awe in the visitor and provides an insight into life during mediaeval times. Beaumaris Castle has very high aesthetic significance.

Communal Significance

Designed by the unparalleled military architect James of St George, Beaumaris Castle was the final Castle built in the Principality of Gwynedd by King Edward I, one of the most important military leaders of his day. The Castle has a long association with the Bulkeley family and sits in the grounds of Baron Hill. The Castle was also painted by J.M.W. Turner in 1835 (visited 1798). A Royal Eisteddfod was held in 1832 which was attended by Princess Victoria (later Queen). The Castle also benefits from a reversal in local opinion, having been a stark and imposing symbol of tyrannical oppression, the Castle is now a heritage asset the local community are rightly proud of. Beaumaris Castle has very high communal significance.

4. The Current Site

The visitor centre facility is located to the west of the Scheduled Monument and Grade I listed Beaumaris Castle and is built up against the boundary walls of the wider essential setting.

The site is accessed from the south-west entrance leading from the public highway on the east end of Castle Street. The site sits within the curtilage on the outer banks defences of Beaumaris Castle.

As illustrated by drawing CADWBC03-DR-2200, the majority of the visitor centre building is not visible from the public highway. The building is not harmful to the historic setting due to it currently being just outside the arc of view for the significant views from the Castle.



Figure 1 – above left: view of the castle and moat from outside the visitor centre; above right: view of the visitor centre entrance from the public highway



Figure 2 – above left: view of the visitor centre from the public highway; above right: view of the visitor centre from footpath towards the castle

5. Proposed Changes

5.1 Summary

The proposals is to reorder the existing ticketing office and shop to improve visitor flow and prevent bottlenecks which currently result in doors remaining open when busy. The reordering of the shop will allow the retail offer to match those of the other key Cadw sites and allow for a more efficient layout. The visitor facility needs to be operated by one custodian during quiet times, but to accommodate two points of sale during periods of high demand.

Having identified that the existing facility was outside of the critical view arc, we were emboldened to develop a more contemporary intervention for the visitor entrance following our initial review of 'use'. Our aim was to reinstate a sense of arrival. We have strengthened the link between the Castle and the initial visitor entrance by using the line of the outer curtain wall as a grid to focus the new circulation routes in the developing options.

A simple flat roof extension to the existing building would allow the infilled section where the new rear entrance is located to be delivered. The shop layout is built up using the proprietary shop units used in Harlech and Conwy Castles.

5.2 Impact of the proposals

Cadw identifies four core tests to assess the impact of proposals. These are: impact on the evidential; historic; aesthetic; and communal values; and the risks and benefits associated with the proposals (Cadw 2017, p. 9).

5.2.1 The effect on the evidential value of the site and Beaumaris Castle:

Prior to the erection of the existing visitor centre building in 2005, an archaeological survey was conducted and recorded. As the area of ground directly below the proposed infilled area has already been surveyed and previously excavated ready for a hardstanding slab, there is no risk of disturbance to any below ground archaeology in and around the immediate setting of the building.

Accordingly, the proposals will have a **neutral** overall impact on the evidential value of the asset.

5.2.2 The effect on the historic value of the site and Beaumaris Castle:

The historic significance of the site and the castle relates to its engaging connection with the past and it being a prime and fine example of 13th Century military architecture. These proposals do not affect these aspects of significance mainly as the visitor centre is outside the arc of view for the significant views from the Castle.

The overall proposal will have a **neutral** impact on the historical value of the site and castle.

5.2.3 The effect on the aesthetic value of the site and Beaumaris Castle:

Similarly, as the proposed external alterations to the visitor centre building will be minimal, this will have no impact on the aesthetic value of the site and castle.

Drawings CADWBC03-DR-2000 and CADWBC03-DR-2200 demonstrate that the footprint of the building will not extend beyond the existing and that the façade's language and materials will largely remain the same. Additionally, the alterations internally will have no impact on the internal views from within the castle walls therefore the proposal will have **no** impact on the aesthetic value of the overall site and castle.

5.2.4 The effect on the communal value of the site and Beaumaris Castle:

The proposals aims to create a sense of arrival and strengthen the link between the Castle and the initial visitor entrance by using the line of the outer curtain wall as a grid to focus the new circulation routes that will provide a direct view and path towards the castle's entrance. Overall, this will enhance the visitors' experience of the historic site.

Accordingly, the communal value of the neighbouring site and castle will be **positively** improved.

6. Summary Heritage Impact Assessment

Proposed Work	Objective	Significance of Affected Fabric	Assessing Beneficial Impact	Assessing Adverse Impact	Proposed Solution
Internal reordering of existing visitor centre facility along with minor external alterations to the existing fabric, including access improvements.	<p>To extend existing building in order to maximise retail space capable of housing new proprietary Cadw shop units/ furniture.</p> <p>To improve staff accommodation.</p> <p>To enhance visitor experience of historic site by reinstating a sense of arrival.</p> <p>To strengthen the link between the Castle and the initial visitor entrance into the visitor centre.</p>	<p>Beaumaris Castle is of very high evidential, historic, aesthetic and communal significance.</p> <p>The Ticketing section of the Visitor Centre is of minimal historic significance. The Visitor Centre has a moderate communal interest associated with the site.</p>	The current proposals strengthen the links between the existing visitor centre and historic site and castle.	The minor alterations proposed to the existing Visitor Centre will have no adverse impact on the historic site and structure.	The proposed infilling of covered open areas to the existing footprint are modest in size. Furthermore, the proposed minor changes to the elevation facing the castle will be discreet as the language of the facade will remain the same with new materials to match the existing.

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Appendix A: Listing Descriptions

Full Report for Listed Buildings



Summary Description of a Listed Buildings

Reference Number	Building Number	Grade	Status	Date of Designation	Date of Amendment
84771		II	Designated	13/07/2005	13/07/2005

Name of Property

Gatepiers and Gates, Ticket office, Boundary Walls and Railings at Beaumaris Castle

Address

Location

Unitary Authority	Community	Town	Locality	Easting	Northing
Isle of Anglesey	Beaumaris	Beaumaris	Beaumaris	260663	376171

Street Side

Location

Main gates and ticket office situated at E end of Castle Street; attached wall & railings to the E opposite Courthouse Museum; a solid rubble wall runs N to behind toilet block; short return wall along S perimeter at the David Hughes Community Centre.

Description

Broad Class	Period
Defence	

History

<http://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=en&id...> 20/02/2019

The main gatepiers and gates first appear on the 1829 town map, which also shows boundary walls along the W and S sides of the castle in the same locations as today. The ticket office was built in 1954 to designs by the Ministry of Works inscribed with the initials "KWB" and the adjoining metal wicket gate, designed "to match existing railings", was added in 1955. A chimney is shown on the architects' drawings in the blank wall where the modern horizontal window now exists. The 1925 date of guardianship for Beaumaris Castle would be the most likely date for the metal railings on the dwarf walls along the S side of the castle, as the 1954-5 proposals show a different style of design.

Exterior

The two main gatepiers are octagonal coursed blocks of ashlar masonry with plain cappings; pair of Regency-Gothic metal gates to carriage opening with cusped Gothic arches below the top rails and quatrefoil frieze over the dog bars with segmental arched braces. A short section of plain railing with wicket-gate under is attached to each side of the ticket office. Square single-storey classical lodge with pale dressed ashlar quoins, plinth band, window and door surrounds contrasting with darker rubble facings. Pyramidal slate roof with ball finial and oversailing eaves with curved brackets. Outer face has bull's eye window with raised voussoirs to surround and recessed 4-part glazing; simple Venetian-style window to driveway and tall arched and keyblocked doorway with traceried fanlight to inner face. Long horizontal modern opening for ticket office faces the pedestrian entrance which has single metal gate and a third octagonal ashlar gatepier to left. This is attached to the rubble boundary wall (approx 2m high) which runs N to meet a short return section of brick-lined wall which divides the screens toilet block from the open grounds at the David Hughes Community Centre. Set into brickwork are several old carved stones, one bearing the date 1867. Attached to S side of the main gatepier is a curving dwarf wall with dressed cappings which supports early C20 metal railings with sinuous finials flanking the heads of the main uprights in an Art Nouveau manner. Opposite the drawbridge entrance to the outer ward of the castle, there are two simple stone gatepiers with plain double metal gates. This boundary wall with railings ends against the E dock wall (the Gunners Walk) to the right of the main gatehouse into the castle.

Interior

Reason for designation

Included for the special historic interest of this prominent set of enclosure walls, gates and railings around this Grade I listed and scheduled monument.

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Appendix B: Drawings