

Ken Skates AC / AM
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Diwylliant, Chwaraeon a Thwristiaeth
Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-607
Ein cyf/Our ref KS/00055/15

William Powell AM
Chair
Petitions Committee
Tŷ Hywel
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Cardiff
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28 January 2015

Dear William,

Thank you for forwarding to me the additional seven notes of correspondence sent by members of the public to your committee for my consideration.

The correspondence has been received in support of the petition requesting the Welsh Government to acquire Garth Celyn (which I understand to refer to the estate comprising Pen y Bryn, a private dwelling and its surrounding land currently on the market), in order to protect the remains for the nation.

The sales particulars for the property note “according to longstanding tradition and claims, Garth Celyn, the promontory on which the property stands, is believed to have been the site of the 13th century royal palace, the home of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, the first Prince of Wales”.

As I outlined in my previous letter, the village of Abergwyngregyn is recognised as being of great historic importance as the location of medieval Garth Celyn, one of the *llysoedd*, or courts of the Princes of Gwynedd. However, opinion remains divided amongst historians regarding the actual location of the historic court. The site occupied by Pen y Bryn is one of two potential locations, the other being the area adjacent to the medieval castle mound known as y Mwd.

The main concern raised in the correspondence is that the Welsh Government ensures the protection of Garth Celyn for future generations. I am satisfied that existing statutory designations placed upon both the house of Pen y Bryn, the nearby earthwork enclosure (believed to be of medieval date) and y Mwd castle mound and adjacent area provide just such protection.

Pen y Bryn is listed grade II* and the earthwork enclosure near the house and y Mwd are both scheduled ancient monuments. Listing means that a house can continue to be occupied, whilst providing an important safeguard for managing future change. Any works which will change the character of the building requires Listed Building Consent (LBC). Similarly, consent is required from the Welsh Government for any proposals that might impact on and affect the historic significance of the scheduled sites.

Acquisition of historic properties into guardianship by the Welsh Government/Cadw is regarded as an option of last resort and is not usual practice for properties that are either occupied or capable of being occupied, such as is the case for Pen y Bryn.

When reading the correspondence I noted that a number of the correspondents refer positively to actions undertaken by the present owner to open her house to visitors and school groups. I am aware from initiatives such as Open Doors, which encourages owners of historic properties to provide public access to historic sites and buildings across Wales, just how popular and beneficial this can be to building interest in our shared heritage and would add my commendations to her for doing this.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken Skates', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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