

RUPERRA CASTLE

PUBLIC INQUIRY

**PROOF OF EVIDENCE SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE
RUPERRA CASTLE PRESERVATION TRUST**

BY

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INTRODUCTION

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My Identity:

My name is John Hamo Thorneycroft. I am a qualified architect (Dip. Arch. Welsh School of Architecture) and Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries with 35 years experience of working with Scheduled Monuments and Historic Buildings. I retired from English Heritage in 2005 where I had helped to set up and then headed The Government Historic Buildings Advisory Unit. In this capacity I was responsible for managing statutory casework (including DoE Circular 18/84 consultations) and providing expert advice on Government and Crown owned Listed Buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments countrywide.

Before the formation of English Heritage in 1983 I had worked in the Department of Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings (DAMHB) DoE managing major projects and advising on fabric conservation programmes at Hampton Court Palace, Osterley Park, Ham House and Apsley House.

During this time I developed a special interest in historic brickwork and provided an annual lecture to the Architectural Association Conservation course on this subject

My specific competence to present this evidence**Professional**

Between 1986-91 and again between 1992-97 I was chosen to lead English Heritage's team of archaeologists, architectural historians and conservation specialists providing advice on the reconstruction at Hampton Court Palace and Windsor Castle following major fire damage.

Since retirement, drawing upon the special experience gained, I have continued to lecture and advise on post fire response, stabilization, research and restoration and as a member of ICOMOS I have given papers on post fire restoration at workshops in France, Austria and Poland.

Personal

I have almost a lifetime's connection with Ruperra Castle having first got to know it when I lived at Lower Machen between 1947-57 (b. 24.03.40) Since 1997 I have been assisting the RCCT (now the Ruperra Castle Preservation Trust) with informal professional advice initially on their Heritage Lottery bid and subsequently on planning and conservation issues related directly to this Inquiry

Object of evidence:

1. To present a statement of the overall significance of the site
2. To summarise the history and significance of the Scheduled and Listed Grade II* Castle and its Grade II Listed outbuildings.
3. To assess the current condition of the castle
4. To outline the urgent works required as a holding measure to mitigate further deterioration and collapse of the Monument

PART 1

INFORMATIVE

1.1 Definition: Statement of Significance

In 1997, about the same time as the present owner took on Ruperra, the Heritage Lottery Fund was commissioning experts at English Heritage to draw up guidelines for applicants on how to prepare Conservation Plans*

These guidelines were launched in March 1998 at a conference called 'Conservation Plans for Historic Places'

They required that applicants provide a **Statement of Significance** to demonstrate a proper understanding and appreciation of their site as a first step before embarking on the design for any scheme affecting such Historic Places

Conservation plans with statements of significance, were from then on expected by English Heritage to accompany applications to help us test the validity of more complex or contentious proposals often involving Enabling Development.

The key role of the Statement of Significance was again stressed as required information for consultations with English Heritage on proposals affecting nationally important Heritage Assets in 'Planning and Development in the Historic Environment' (English Heritage March 2004)

*A Conservation Plan is a Document which explains

- Why the site is significant
- How that significance is vulnerable or sensitive
- What policies the developer will adopt for conserving that significance

Statement of the overall Significance and Heritage Merit of the site covered by the enabling development proposals

1.2 The main built components of the site and their designations are:-

The Castle: Scheduled Ancient Monument (GM511) and Grade II* Listed Building dating from 1626 with late 18c adaptations and minor Edwardian additions.

The Staff Accommodation Grade II listed building c1785-9(Altered c 1912)

The Stables and Coach House: Grade II Listed Building 1909-13 (E range 1785-9)

The 'Carnation House' Grade II listed building 1912-

The Generator house Grade II listed building 1920-

The Castellated park wall Grade II Listed structure 1920-

The buildings are set within the remains of an 18th century landscaped park and vestigial Edwardian formal gardens which together are Listed Grade II on Cadw/ICOMOS register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest

The site also lies at the centre of a designated Special Landscape Area (SLA Ref16) and a Conservation Area under the Caerphilly County Borough Council Unitary Development Plan 1996-2011

1.3 Additional Significance and Heritage Merit

I submit that the overall significance of the site as a Nationally important Heritage Asset is, however, greater than the sum of its separate designations since it combines the following aspects, identified within the EH guidelines, which state that sites may be considered of additional significance/Heritage Merit for the following reasons

Archaeological potential:

The site of the medieval house of the Lewis family-possibly partially within the footprint of the existing castle,

The original (1626-) layout of gatehouse and upper and lower walled court yards,

The possible remains of formal parterre gardens related to the Royal visit in 1645 attrib to Isaac de Caux, Inigo Jones and John Webb together with subsequent

landscaping work under William Winde (Ref. Landscape Proof of Evidence items 2.3 and 2.4)

Architectural History or design significance:

Ruperra is unique building -the most idiosyncratic and cultured example of a 17c courtier style house of the Welsh gentry class in South Wales-Sir Thomas Morgan had wished to emulate the great English landed gentry of the time but, significantly, he returned to East Glamorgan to build his innovative Renaissance house. I will amplify this aspect of Heritage Merit in my following account of its history.

Association with historic events, literature or important people

- 1) As an early 17th century Renaissance castle it is a direct link to the most sophisticated aspects of the international cult of chivalry of the time.
- 2) As a power house of the Welsh gentry and a past centre of Welsh culture
- 3) As the highest status house of its time in East Glamorgan hosting a Royal visitor who apparently offered Sir Phillip Morgan his experts from the Office of the King's Works to design formal gardens.

Community /commemorative social value:

The past life of the Tredegar estate connects the history of Ruperra to the past lives of local families. The castle fire on the night of Pearl Harbour (6 Dec 1941) is still remembered as a major event in the district. The idyllic landscape lies within the Special Landscape Area "green wedge" between Newport and Cardiff and is highly valued as an amenity by local people.

Ecological and wildlife value:

Through its comparative seclusion and lack of use the site has become a haven for wildlife complementing the Ruperra Conservation Trust's woodlands on Coed Craig Ruperra where a number of protected species have the opportunity to breed undisturbed. (Ref: Landscape Proof of Evidence items 4.7, 4.8)

Interest as a designed landscape:

At Ruperra this is partially recognised by its inclusion in the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens in Wales (Glamorgan) pp.30-37 Cadw/ICOMOS UK (Core Document) but retains high potential for further research covering its important earlier phases (Ref; Landscape Proof of Evidence part 2.: Significance of historic landscape)

Natural or aesthetic beauty:

One of the most vulnerable and valuable qualities of Ruperra is the visual balance achieved over the years between the ruined castle, its group of historic outbuildings and its undisturbed rural setting. The castle has literally become 'part of the landscape'

The way in which the site combines any of the above:

Ruperra has, what I would submit is the unusual distinction of combining 8 out of 9 of English Heritage's relevant listed criteria for added Heritage Merit

1.4 Significance in wider contexts

See Fig 1: The 'Green Wedge' with Ruperra at its centre

Context of the local countryside

Satellite views clearly show how the Ruperra Estate lies at the heart or nucleus of the triangle of rural land or 'Green Wedge' that includes the Local Authorities Special Landscape Area. It also shows its close relationship to the smaller wedge of countryside formed by the marshy farmlands of the Levels lying along the coast of the Bristol Channel. These rural land uses together maintain a vital buffer zone between Newport and Cardiff, and in consequence offer important amenity value of which Ruperra Estate and the surrounding woodland of Coed Ruperra forms the most significant focus

Context of World Architectural Heritage

The 'Plight of Ruperra Castle' as one of the worst cases of a major Building at Risk in Wales has, over many years, been a repeated theme from a galaxy of highly articulate leading Architectural Journalists and Historians. This has raised awareness both at National and International level of 'This hugely important item of the National Heritage of Wales which becomes more at risk day by day' (Forgotten Welsh Houses-Michael Tree and Mark Baker 2008)

In 2007, the threat posed by the enabling development proposals to the fragile equilibrium of the Heritage Site and its Spirit of Place was recognised by the World Monuments Fund who considered adding it to their 2008 World Watch List. This was deferred pending advice on the outcome of the statutory processes.

It is however a powerful indication of the value placed upon the Castle as a very rare example of its architectural type which raises it to the status of a National Heritage Asset of world cultural interest

See Fig 2: The Castle and its setting-satellite view

1.5 General Statement of significance and summary

The setting of the ruined castle is a remarkable survival of an unspoilt and nearly forgotten Park landscape come down to us, by default, through years of low level agricultural use. The price of this rural idyll has been the years of indifference and neglect suffered by the Castle

What we have now, at Ruperra, is a seamless symbiosis of castle, outbuildings and landscape-the whole being significantly greater than the sum of its parts. And by this token, the greater the imposition of new build into the setting or the changes of use and increased occupancy and activities this new build may bring, the more will the significance of that whole be compromised.

The overriding Significance and Value of the Ruperra site as a Heritage Asset lies not in the individual significance of the Castle alone but in that tranquil Spirit of Place that holds the sense of history of which it forms a part.

We submit that the tipping point in the amount of intervention that can be sustained by the site without compromising this overriding significance is reached when redevelopment is allowed to break out from the envelope of the existing structures.

As long as this significance remains intact, with any intervention confined within this limit, Ruperra will retain its full potential to be properly recognised and celebrated by future generations as an invaluable National Heritage Asset for Wales

I will conclude this presentation of overall significance of the site with 2 quotes

First: Donald Insall advising the RCCT in 1997:

“The beauty of Ruperra is not only the beauty of the Castle but of its splendid landscape setting. Any form of conservation or restoration of the Castle must therefore be seen IN THE CONTEXT of its setting and as such the conservation or restoration of the landscape must be considered as a vital part of any proposal for the Castle”

Finally may I refer to the concluding statement in Prof. John Gwynfor Evans' Proof of Evidence:

“In view of the historical and cultural background to Rhiw'rperai it is considered that the new building proposals are not compatible with the historic environment of the region in which this large castellated mansion is located”

See Fig.3: The castle and its tranquil landscape from Coed Craig Ruperra

PART 2

The History and Significance of Ruperra Castle and its outbuildings

2.1 Introduction

I have relied in the first sections of what follows to a large extent upon the Appraisal* which I obtained exclusively for the RCCT last year from Mark Girouard-the most eminent of our Architectural historians specialising in architecture of the Tudor and Jacobean periods and author *inter alia* of “Robert Smythson and the Elizabethan Country House” which includes a scholarly explanation of Ruperra’s special place in the history of European architecture. *This Appraisal was enclosed with Mark Girouard’s representation to the Inspectorate dated 07th August 2008

2.2 The Castle and its inspiration

“Ruperra Castle is not only one of the few outstanding Elizabethan and Jacobean Houses in Wales; it belongs to the very small and precious group of buildings expressing, in architectural form, the cult of chivalry which is one of the most remarkable phenomena of the period (late 16th early 17th century).

Beginning in about 1580 and for the next 50 years or so a lavish display of pageants masques firework displays etc staged by courtiers used the language of chivalry to symbolise devotion to the Crown or celebrate dynastic marriages. Mimic or pageant Castles frequently featured and the cult spilled over into literature-most notably in Philip Sidney’s best selling and influential romance ‘The Arcadia’ –which evokes ‘a dream world with its own reality’ and where a tilt enacted before such a pageant castle features prominently

The history of these ‘pageant castles’ goes back well into the middle ages. There was never any serious attempt to make them resemble real castles

See Fig.4: Inigo Jones: Mimic castle from the court masque ‘Oberon’ 1611

They symbolised an intellectual attitude --a frame of mind and of their very nature they were ephemeral put up for a grand event and then dismantled usually without any record being made. But it was this attitude of mind that created a very special small group of more permanent buildings, above all actual country houses dressed up as castles-with the same symbolic programme as the pageant structures.

-They must have been considered the epitome of sophistication and courtly wit by contemporaries

The surviving group is a very small one-and all the more valuable for that.

Lulworth Castle in Dorset (1603-8)The Little Castle in Bolsover Derbyshire(1611-)Walton Castle near Clevedon in Somerset (1615) and finally, in 1626-8 Ruperra.-the only such structure to be built in Wales

2.3 Sir Thomas Morgan's 'Arcadia'

Ruperra and its siblings may all have been inspired by 'The Great Tilt' held at Wilton House in 1604 –to celebrate the dynastic marriage of William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke.

Thomas Morgan of Ruperra, Sheriff of Glamorgan in 1617, became Steward to the Welsh Earl and a trustee to this marriage settlement; he must have been at the tournament (and maybe took part in it). In 1623 he was knighted at Wilton by King James 1st

While Herbert, a Tudor courtier, was, like Henry VIII a generation earlier, an example of the new highly cultured and multi talented Renaissance man, Prof Gwynfor Jones has reminded us that Morgan brought with him to Wilton all that was best of traditional Welsh culture that his family, one of the most eminent in South Wales, had encouraged and celebrated within their wide sphere of influence. In 1624 he had come back to East Glamorgan, complete with a knighthood and fired by the spirit of that new Renaissance age.

The neglected ruins of Ruperra Castle in its threatened but as yet unspoilt Arcadian setting –a highly sophisticated/high status offshoot of the great courtier houses of the period -remains the embodiment of this spirit.

Evidence of high status is demonstrated most vividly by Charles 1st's four nights stay at Ruperra in July 1645, in the thick of the Civil War, choosing to use it as a safe base from which to attempt to direct the regrouping of his forces after the battle of Naseby. Despite this preoccupation, he was apparently* sufficiently impressed with the place and its then owner Sir Philip Morgan, to recommend to him three of his top designers from the Office of Works to advise on a project for formal gardens. (Inigo Jones, John Webb & Isaac de Caux)

*(Cotswold Archaeology Report 07040 p10 item 3.14-Core Document)

In Thomas Morgan's Ruperra we see the triumph of court based architectural ideals, but, most significantly, the result is a house still marked by local tradition-that gathers added value as a cultured Welshman's stylish country seat in a land fringed with the decaying medieval castles of English Marcher Lords and where many of the great houses of the time were still inward looking and fortified with little or no Renaissance influences.

See Fig.5: Formal layouts of Lulworth and Ruperra compared

Ruperra relates closely to Lulworth, in the arrangement of its formal setting, its plan, its basic configuration of four round towers and in its distinctive windows with tall thin arched lights

The Ruperra windows with their central lights carried up above the rest, perhaps look as much forward towards Serlio and the new Italian Renaissance fashion as back to the indigenous Gothic sources, and are diagnostic of work of the Architect/Mason Arnold family who had worked at Lulworth. Their distinctive Renaissance Gothic detailing is also found in the magnificent but now much weathered porch and surviving ashlar arches

See Fig. 6: Ruperra Castle: The south Porch

The mixture of classical and Gothic is typical of the cult of chivalry drawing its inspiration from classical and well as medieval and often even mythical times. The design for Ruperra and Lulworth has also variously been ascribed to John Thorpe, Robert Smythson, Inigo Jones, and Isaac de Caux (the latter two worked for Herbert at Wilton and are reputed to have advised Morgan on landscaping at Ruperra following the royal visit in 1645)

See Fig: 7: Guted by Fire: Ruperra and Lulworth castle ruins compared

The significance of Lulworth ruins were properly recognised when English Heritage took it into Guardianship from the Weld family in 1984, first carrying out emergency stabilization and then allowing it to be gradually restored and opened it to the public under a 'Local Management Agreement Plan' with the family for display as a roofed consolidated ruin 'in an undressed state'

See Fig.8: Lulworth: consolidated and roofed shell

2.4 Beginnings; Sir Thomas Morgan's castle 1626-1642

Before beginning his startlingly new courtier house at Ruperra Sir Thomas Morgan cleared the site by demolishing the 15th century home of his wife's forebears, the Lewis family. His Renaissance castle probably covers at least part of the footprint, of the earlier house and aspects of the landscaping may already have been in place, focussed on this spot.

In 1642 Sir Thomas was succeeded his second son Sir Philip (the entertainer of royalty 3 years later-see below) and then by his grandson, another Thomas Morgan. What follows traces, in outline, the subsequent fortunes of the castle and its landscape over the succeeding centuries

2.5 A Royal residence: July 27-30 1645

Charles 1st stays with Sir Philip Morgan using the castle as a temporary base to rally support in the West. Apparently new parterres may subsequently have been laid out, at the King's suggestion, with advice from Inigo Jones, Isaac de Caux and John Webb (by then Jones' amanuensis) –see also 2.3 above

2.6 The Kemeys ownership 1678- c1700: William Winde

Probably shortly following the second marriage of Elizabeth Thomas of Ruperra (sister of Thomas Morgan II) to Sir Charles Kemys of 'Kevenmabli' in 1678 further additions appear to have been made to the formal gardens as William. Winde, courtier, gentleman architect and sometime landscape designer records that he advised Sir Charles on transplanting mature orchard trees there (Landscape proof 2.4 refers)

2.7 The Duke of Beaufort's progress 1684: Thomas Dineley

The Duke's visit to attend a reception given for him by Sir Charles and Lady Kemeys at Ruperra on the evening of August 18th 1684 was the apotheosis of his famous and grandiose progress through of Wales and Gloucestershire. (Ref: Thomas Dineley Ms: description beneath sketch of Ruperra from the 'Account of the official progress of his grace Henry the First Duke of Beaufort through Wales' (Beaufort papers)

2.8 Map of the Demesne of Ruperra 1764

This survey of 'The property of (the late?) Sir Thomas Morgan' (Thomas. Morgan III) by William Morrice is the earliest proper surviving evidence of the changes and additions that had taken place to the formal garden layouts and the Parkland apart

from Dineley's crude sketch from 1684-one can only guess at which additions to the 1626 layout were post the 1645 royal visit or were part of the 'transplantations' under William Winde. Importantly though, all this was before the late 18th century landscaping that removed the formal layout and relates to Hardwick's post fire reconstruction. (see below)

2.9 Fire and Reconstruction 1785-9

Between these dates under circumstances which remain obscure, Ruperra is said to have been gutted by fire presumably with the loss of all that was combustible in its early 17th century interiors and then rebuilt by Thomas Hardwick Junior (1752-1829)

The main impact of Hardwick's work on the castle was to demolish the tripartite gables of the top floor of the original design (where there is likely to have been the most destructive of the fire damage and thus most scope for elevational change) and rebuild with level battlemented wall parapets linking from tower to tower

The change is clear when comparing the views taken by Thomas Dineley in 1684 and J.P Neale in 1820

See Fig.9: 1684 and 1820 views compared

Comparison of these views shows that Hardwick took the opportunity to reorder the fenestration to provide 2 extra windows on the top floor of each elevation-reflecting more commodious replanning at that level

Hardwick was a pupil of Sir William Chambers. But both he and his father worked for the Adams Brothers and he would have been familiar with their then fashionable Castle style. So the neoclassic plasterwork, minstrel's gallery with ionic pilasters and the cantilevered stone stair which he introduced in the interior would have seemed entirely consistent at that time with Ruperra's newly castellated exterior

See Fig.10:The Adam castle style: Dalquharran Ayrshire 1790

Hardwick's severe neo classical exterior style is seen in the staff accommodation (containing estate office, dairy and Laundry Listed Grade II) and one surviving stable wing constructed at this time which have something of his Shire hall in Dorchester.

Note: Some of the windows of this building appear to have been altered during the post 1909 improvements

See Fig.11: Shire Hall Dorchester and staff accommodation Ruperra

It seems likely that the original 17th century formal arrangement of gatehouse and raised walled entrance courtyard with subsidiary service yards adjacent as seen in the Dinley drawing,(and the 1764 survey) had survived right up to the time of the fire. Their removal in favour of softer landscaping would be consistent with Hardwick's programme of improvement.

2.10 Edwardian Improvements 1909-

At the beginning of the 20th century Ruperra was in a state of dilapidation, in part through Frederick Morgan, the then owner's, fixed aversion to change and expense. The earlier castellated stable block, of which we know little, had burnt down in 1890.and it was only after his death in 1909 that his son Courtney could venture to replace it with a more spacious and convenient building and repair and improve the castle itself with new stone porches on the east and west fronts

See Fig.12: New Stables 1912

Also during this period elaborate terraced formal gardens make their appearance laid out below the new, grand but plain, 'Carnation House' by McKenzie and Moncur (Cotswold Archaeology Report 07040-Core Document)-the significance of both these features will be further addressed within the Landscape Proof.

See Fig.13: Ruins of the 1914 Carnation House

2.11 The last improvements 1920-

In what was to be the last Tredegar money to be invested in the castle more repairs were undertaken in the 1920s, a castellated boundary wall was built; electricity was installed with power from steam driven generators in a purpose built engine house

Despite these improvements, the life of the house was already ebbing away -used only occasionally with a skeleton staff as a kind of giant hunting lodge

Ruperra, by this last phase of its development, had, over 300 years, begun as one of the grandest, most sophisticated and remarkable houses in S Wales, emerged,

through the first fire, as a more conventional 18c country house with typical outbuildings in its landscaped setting, drifted more or less unimproved to the end of the 19c then from 1909 acquiring the decent Edwardian stables and a garnish of formal gardens crowned with that great Carnation House.

2.12 Wilderness Years and destruction 1935-

With the loss of family interest, the abortive sale of the estate and subsequent disposal of remaining contents in 1935, was inevitable.

Already, then, this was a Building at Risk and the fire in December 1941, put down to overloaded unsafe wiring while in use as a barracks, a predictable accident waiting to happen.

Rejection of the gutted building by the National Trust 1943 condemned Ruperra to the wilderness years that were to follow

In 1956 the Ruperra tenanted farmland, along with the rest of the enormous Tredegar Estate was sold to The Eagle Star Insurance Company, in this way the status of the castle was still further degraded to that of a useless and forbidding ruin.

In 1982, the news of the collapse of the SE Tower into what was now a farmers field acted as a distress call and Ruperra briefly claimed National attention—the late Giles Worsley later visited and reported ***‘Ruperra was one of the great Renaissance Houses in South Wales. Its destruction by fire in 1941 was a national tragedy—the neglect of the house and the park that surrounds it is a national disgrace’***

However, behind the scenes, Pat Jones Jenkins was marshalling the local History Society and wider public opinion over this National Disgrace on their doorstep and by 1996 the ‘first’ RCCT came into being. I will leave it to her proof of evidence describe the history of the struggle to safeguard this unique building and its cultural landscape for posterity that leads us all to meet here at this inquiry today.

End of history and assessment of significance of the castle and its outbuildings

PART 3

Assessment of the current condition of the Castle, Scheduled Ancient Monument, Grade II* Listed Building

3.1 Background

The fire of the night of 6 December 1941 gutted the entire interior of the Castle excepting the vaults... No systematic clearance of the debris fields seems ever to have been undertaken and no attempt made by any of the owners since the fire to protect surviving fabric or to otherwise prevent further deterioration

The collapse of the SE tower in 1982 remains the most obvious effect of this longstanding neglect

Eyewitness accounts of the fire, its likely cause and immediate aftermath, are collected in Pat Jones Jenkins booklet 'War and Flames' (Ruperra Conservation Trust 2001)

Structural Surveys of the castle with expert recommendations have been carried out in 1996 for the Trust by Gifford and Partners –Specialist Conservation Civil Engineers who were at the time advising the Sec of State on the reconstruction of Windsor Castle following the 1992 fire and in 2003 for Barakat Ruperra by local consultant structural engineers. Bradley Associates. These surveys could not fully cover the upper levels of the ruins and no systematic recording (for example rectified photography) to establish detail conditions was attempted.

Preliminary Archaeological Survey of the standing archaeology of the castle ruins was carried out for Barakat Ruperra by Cotswold Archaeology in 2001 followed up in 2007 by an Archaeological desk Assessment of the whole site affected by the proposals (CA Report 07040-Core Document))

3.2 Condition

The following assessment of current condition is based upon report to the (then) Ruperra Castle Conservation Trust in 1997 by Gifford and Partners engineers specialising in analysis and advice on the stabilization of Historic Structures. It is reasonable to assume that their findings remain a reliable

indicator of the condition of the buildings with caveat that all problems then identified may have progressed

3.2.1 Foundations: Importantly, surveys have recorded no evidence of foundation movement

3.2.2 External Walls: Surveys confirm that the approximately 1m thick outside walls of the main body of the building remain fundamentally stable and are not affected by the loss of lateral restraint. It is likely that bonding timbers on the inner skin have failed/degraded but this has not compromised the overall stability of the wall.

3.2.3 Crenellations: Long runs of Thomas Hardwick's parapets on the N and W façade are missing or show extensive weathering and losses

See Fig.14: NW tower showing fracture running between windows and part of the W elevation showing typical loss of 18th century crenellations

3.2.4 South Porch: The ashlar masonry, fine carved strapwork and armorial decoration shows very extensive weathering and a number of areas of detail are already eroded beyond recognition or lost

While Record photographs show that this process has accelerated over the past 20 years. no attempt has ever been made to improve matters and the whole porch is in need of urgent protection and conservation.

See Fig.15: Condition of armorial over South Porch March 2009

3.2.5 Other Exposed Features: Chimneys. Internal brick partition tops, and some window mullions are heavily weathered and likely to be unstable

3.2.6 Internal walls: Superficial surveys in 1997 and 2001 indicate that much of the extensively used handmade brickwork within the shell is primary. This is perhaps the earliest example of its use in South Wales (size typically 9.25"x4.25"x2.00")-

See Fig. 16: 17th and 18th century of brickwork within the shell (and Donald Insall) (photo JT 1997)

3.2.7 Surviving Beams: The remains of a number of main plated girder beams are wedged in the upper levels of the shell-some showing displacement

3.2.8 Vegetation: There is a very general distribution of well established vegetation at all levels of the building particularly at parapet level and over the ground floor where small trees are growing on some of the debris fields (for example: The Great Hall)

See Fig 17: Tree in the Great Hall (photo JT 1997)

3.2.9 Towers: The three surviving corner towers are of more fragile construction than the main external walls and all show similar vertical cracks between windows. The outer section of the SE corner tower, which was observed to exhibit a marked degree of lean out as early as 1949 finally collapsed in 1982 leaving a precarious overhang of broken masonry at first floor level which remains unattended

See Fig 18: Ruins of the SE Tower which collapsed in 1982 (photo JT 1997)

The use of dissimilar materials in the interior construction (Soft porous brickwork and old red sandstone rubble) with differential thermal movement, together with wind loading have been suggested as contributing to the failure of the comparatively thin Tower walls local to window openings

The vertical cracks on the NW tower are worse than the others still standing and in 1997 the Engineers report advised that it was at the greatest risk of collapsing next. As far as we are aware no attempt has been made by the current owner's consultants to monitor this or any other structural movement or to deploy counteracting measures in the intervening years

3.2.10 Floors: Post Fire and subsequent debris: The debris fields within the building remain substantially as indicated in the 1941 photographs though some salvage of reusable timber etc may have taken place. There is an amount of additional rubble from later collapses of brick partitions in the upper reaches of the building

3.2.11 Semi basement vaults: The vaulted area under the N side of the building, identified as the site of a protected bat roost, remains intact and appears unlikely to deteriorate in the foreseeable future. The vaults would nonetheless benefit from removal of any debris overload or invasive tree root growth from above.

End of Assessment of current condition of the castle

PART 4

Outline of urgent first aid works recommended for immediate Scheduled Monument Consent to arrest/mitigate further deterioration/collapse of the Monument.

4.1 Objective:

As a short to medium term holding action to mitigate the detrimental effect on the Monument of further extended and unquantifiable delays in statutory decision making and funding processes with particular reference to the purpose of this Inquiry and the present deteriorating financial and business climate.

4.2 The outline is based upon precedents taken from (in date order)

Consolidation works at Lulworth Castle 1983-4

Post fire salvage and emergency works at Hampton Court Palace 1986-7

Ditto Uppark House 1991

Ditto Windsor Castle 1992-3

1996 Condition Report ref B0091/01 on Ruperra castle by Giffords

Emergency holding works at Piercefield Park winter 2008

4.3 Surviving Towers-

The serious structural failures should be stabilized by the introduction of Cintec type grouted anchors for the full height of all three remaining towers. It is considered likely that the condition of these towers is by now precarious enough to require the use of temporary shoring while fixing the anchors. To assist stabilization and begin to reduce moisture levels temporary roofs should be considered for the repaired towers. (But ref. Conservation Architect's Proof). Following stabilization, the towers should continue to be monitored.

4.4 SE Tower:

The remaining unstable corbels of masonry caused by the collapse in 1982 should be dismantled

4.5 Preliminary high level salvage, stabilization & propping-craneage

It is fair to assume that since 1996 survey there has been further loss of stability especially at higher levels within the shell of the main structure. To allow other work to proceed safely, specialist demolition contractors should be used (i.e. who can demonstrate prequalification for work on historic structures) under specialist conservation engineers direction to remove loose material, vegetation etc from tops of walls, (Crane and bucket procedure as used post fire at Windsor Castle) and otherwise dismantle/secure or prop all unstable elements (eg cast iron radiators hanging from top floor pipework) throughout the building. Limited weathering /consolidation of wall tops and the deep ledge at top floor level may be possible at this early stage.

Brickwork to the main chimneys should be taken down to a safe level.

4.6 Drying out: temporary roof

It is assumed that this massively constructed building is completely saturated. Given the quantity of brick masonry internally the long term exclusion of rainwater is the only real option for arresting the deterioration of the building. There is a priority to provide temporary roofs to towers once they are repaired. A network of sensors (BMS) should be installed to log moisture levels.

Options for roofing will be discussed in more detail in the Conservation Architects proof

4.7 Porch: special protection and first aid to carved stonework

The weathering in of the whole of the porch structure should be seen as of equal urgency to the stabilization and roofing of the remaining towers. Reports on the extent of deterioration of the carved stonework with recommendation for conservation should be obtained from recognised specialist stone conservators.

4.8 Clearance-Ground Floor Primary Measured Survey & Material Archive

Following the stabilization of the upper levels of the building, carry out controlled (gridded) archaeological clearance of the vegetation/ debris fields to assist drying out of saturated inner walls at low level and relieve any overload on Lower Ground Floor vaults

Set up coarse debris screening process and on site covered storage to maximise recovery of artefacts, plaster detail fragments, constructional elements etc. This follows the precedents set at Uppark and Windsor Castle by English Heritage Central Archaeological Service (but on a reduced scale) and will form the **Ruperra Material Archive**

A ground floor level Primary Measured Survey of surviving features should then be carried out

See Fig.19: Ruperra castle kitchen: debris field and primary hearth arch awaiting archaeological clearance and recording

Compare with

See Fig. 20: Lulworth castle kitchen: Record of hearth arches etc. from Primary Measured Survey

4.9 Observations

Once the present owner had announced his intention to the Local Authority and Cadw to 'save' the castle it might have reasonably been expected that he would have taken immediate steps along at least some of the lines set out above to protect his asset (For example: shoring & anchoring the towers to the matrix and protecting the carved stonework of the porch) given that it's repair and stabilization was a *sine qua non* as part of the terms of the Section 106 Agreement required before enabling development could begin. (Recommendation (B) condition 02) of CCBC Application P/02/0773)

In my submission, it would also, at an early stage, have sent out positive and thus reassuring signals to the Local Authority, Cadw and other concerned expert opinion of his genuine commitment to the care of the Castle.

Over the many intervening years not only has nothing been done but repairs to fire damage caused 'on his watch' in the Grade II Listed stables have also not been carried out despite polite suggestions, falling, however, short of threat of enforcement notice, from the Local Authority

End of Outline schedule of Urgent works

End of Proof of Evidence

John Thorneycroft LVO.FSA.RIBA

Monmouth, March 2009