

## CADW'S ASSESSMENT

The information received by Cadw regarding Lisvane and Llanishen reservoirs enhances the knowledge available at the time of the resurvey of Llanishen community in 2001 when these structures were not put forward for statutory protection. There are several good points which substantiate the historic interest of the Lisvane and Llanishen Reservoirs within the Cardiff water supply system: -

- (a) the early date of 1865 for the Lisvane example (although the Llanishen reservoir which makes up three quarters of the pair opened only in 1886);
- (b) the fact that they are part of an entire system which already possesses other listed structures and;
- (c) that they are fully impounded features with all-round embankments comparable to dock basins.

However, statutory listing is guided by criteria against which the above information is tested for "special interest" and in terms of architectural interest, there is only a minimal case as the bound submission to Cadw (entitled "A Case for Listing") appears to concede. There are no impressive features like eye-catching valve-towers or monumental retaining walls or architectural masonry detailing. Lisvane and Llanishen Reservoirs are overwhelmingly functional in character.

There is a good case for historic interest within the context of the Cardiff water supply system. This system extends from the reservoirs in the Taff valley and other locations in the Brecon Beacons to the monumental water tower on Cyncoed Road, and it is well-known that the later nineteenth-century expansion of the great dock city of Cardiff was necessarily coupled with great public works and urban improvements, including water supply and sewerage. The test, though, is whether the national historic importance of this overall development within Cardiff is enough to secure the judgement that each individual part of the system is of "special historic interest".

Attention is particularly paid to the early date for a reservoir of 1865, but in itself this is not persuasive as the technology had already been extensively implemented in dock and canal basins in the previous half century. Cadw has listed major elements of the major dock walls and installations at the Bute Docks in Cardiff Bay which are generally earlier in date than these reservoirs. The revetted sloping dock walls in Cardiff Bay, similar in construction to the reservoirs, were included in the list only because they defined the dock area of the Bay, and had group value with a group of structures of greater interest (the massive dressed stone dock and lock walls).

To reach a judgement on "special interest" for buildings of this date, the key paragraph of guidance in the criteria is that concerned with selectivity of buildings which states: "After about 1840, because of the greatly increased number of buildings erected and the much larger numbers that have survived, greater selection is necessary to select the best examples of particular building types, and only buildings of definite character and quality are listed".

As the submission to Cadw to notes, other examples of water supply industry structures dating "after about 1840" have already been listed in Wales and these include items at Lake Vyrnwy, the Elan valley, Pontsticill at Vaynor, Llwyn-on at Cwmtaf, and Cantref at Hirwaun. The Lake Vyrnwy reservoir is exactly contemporary with the Llanishen Reservoir, and along with the slightly later Elan valley reservoirs is of international importance. All these other examples are of a higher level of quality than the Lisvane and Llanishen reservoirs, and they all comfortably pass the test of having "definite quality and character" and all qualify as "best examples" of their particular building type. The low key architectural quality and character of the Lisvane and Llanishen Reservoirs indicate that these do not readily meet the criteria. The argument that they are all part of a greater Cardiff supply system is not decisive because the criteria allow Cadw only to select the "best examples" as with other linear industrial works like canal and railway structures, as well as dock basins. In the case of the Elan Valley reservoir system, although the major features were listed, lesser buildings on the line of the pipeline were not included. Cadw does not automatically list the whole of a linear structure.

In conclusion, therefore, while the two reservoirs at Lisvane and Llanishen are certainly of historic importance because they play a part in the Cardiff water supply system, this historic importance is essentially of a local scale. The criteria for listing state that Cadw must be selective for structures of this date. These reservoirs do not qualify for listing as having "special interest" because they are not amongst the best examples in Wales after 1840 of their particular building type. Consequently Cadw is not persuaded that any of the features associated with these two reservoirs should be listed.