

Building the Workhouse



SOURCES

Sources for this unit include:

Minutes of the Llanfyllin Board of Guardians. The originals are held at Powys Archives with digital copies at the Workhouse History Centre, Llanfyllin. They have been catalogued by members of the Dolydd History Group.

Correspondence with the Llanfyllin Union, held at The National Archives, Kew. Material up to 1856 is digitised and has been catalogued by the Dolydd History Group. The catalogue and documents can be viewed without charge on <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>

Local newspapers, available digitally from <https://newspapers.library.wales/>

At their first meeting on 16 February 1837
the Llanfyllin Guardians resolved to build a workhouse

Papers for the election of the Medical officer on the 1st of
March next and also for the election of Relieving officers on
the same day —

Carried.

Mr. Southey moved }
Mr. Baines seconded } That a Workhouse be built for the paupers of this
Union capable of containing 250 paupers —

Carried

Mr. Pugh moved }
Mr. Humphreys seconded } That no General Rule or Regulation of the Board of
Guardians shall be rescinded or varied from except in
cases of Emergency and then for the occasion only and to
the least possible extent unless notice in Writing shall

On 1 March they appointed Thomas Penson as Architect.
They agreed to build the Workhouse close to Llanfyllin.

Officers for the year ending 1837 —
The Election to take place the next Meeting —
Resolved on the Motion of Mr. Baines seconded by Mr. Pugh
that Mr. Penson be elected Architect to the Union —

The Reverend Mr. Hughes proposed and Mr. Baines seconded that
the Workhouse be built within two Miles of the Town of
Llanfyllin —

Mr. Humphreys moved as an Amendment which was seconded by
Whitfield that the Workhouse be built between Stansfield
and the New Bridge on a line with the Canal on the
eligible Spot —

Upon a Division the Amendment was lost and
Original proposition carried —

Local landowners were reluctant to sell a site for the Workhouse.

The Rector, the Rev'd David Hughes, came to the rescue with an offer of land. He imposed three conditions:

- The Workhouse should have its own Churchyard
- A Chaplain should be appointed
- The children should receive Religious Instruction

Handwritten letter from Mr. Williams to the Board of Guardians, dated 1837, regarding the purchase of land for a workhouse by the Rev. Mr. Hughes. The letter details the conditions imposed by the Rector and the writer's efforts to secure their fulfillment.

Handwritten text:

Handwritten text: Handwritten Union

REV. MR. HUGHES

The Rev.^d Mr. Hughes the Rector of this place has consented to sell a portion of his Land for the Erection of a Workhouse on condition that a sufficient Churchyard be added to the Workhouse a proper Chaplain appointed and means taken for Religious Instructions of the Inmate Children admitted —

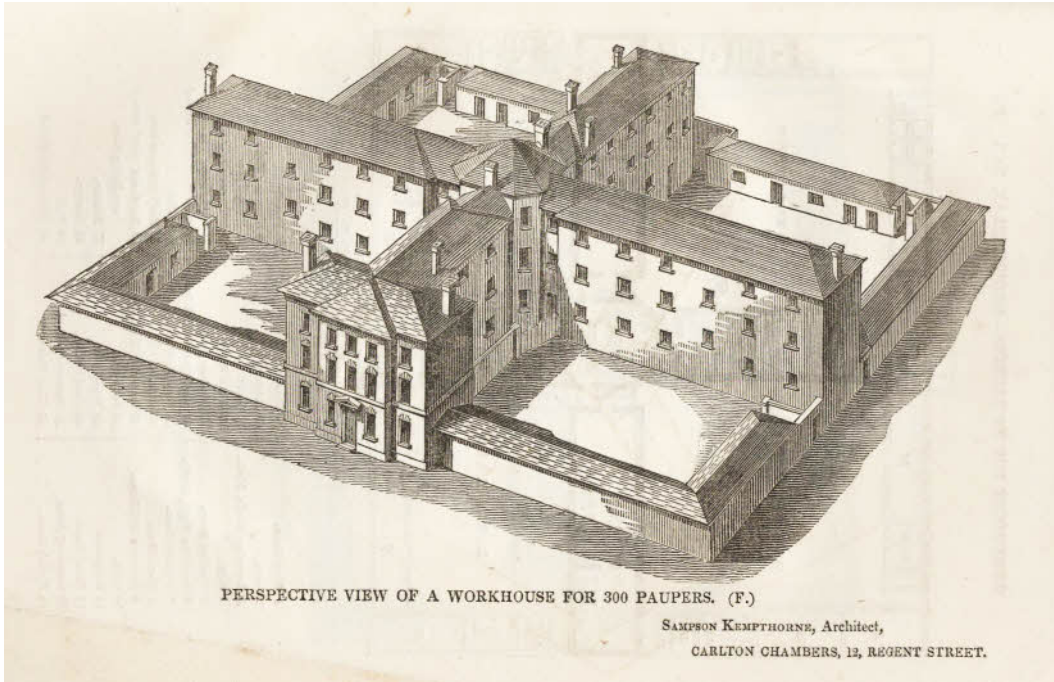
Mr. Hughes is anxious to have these objects secured in such a manner as can raise no doubt of their fulfillment and has desired me to enquire what Measures sh^d. be taken either by introducing the condition into the purchase deed or otherwise effectually to secure such fulfillment — The situation is very eligible & he lab^s at a great personal inconvenience to Mr. Hughes — I am Gent.

Yours very obed^t. serv^t

Allogh Williams

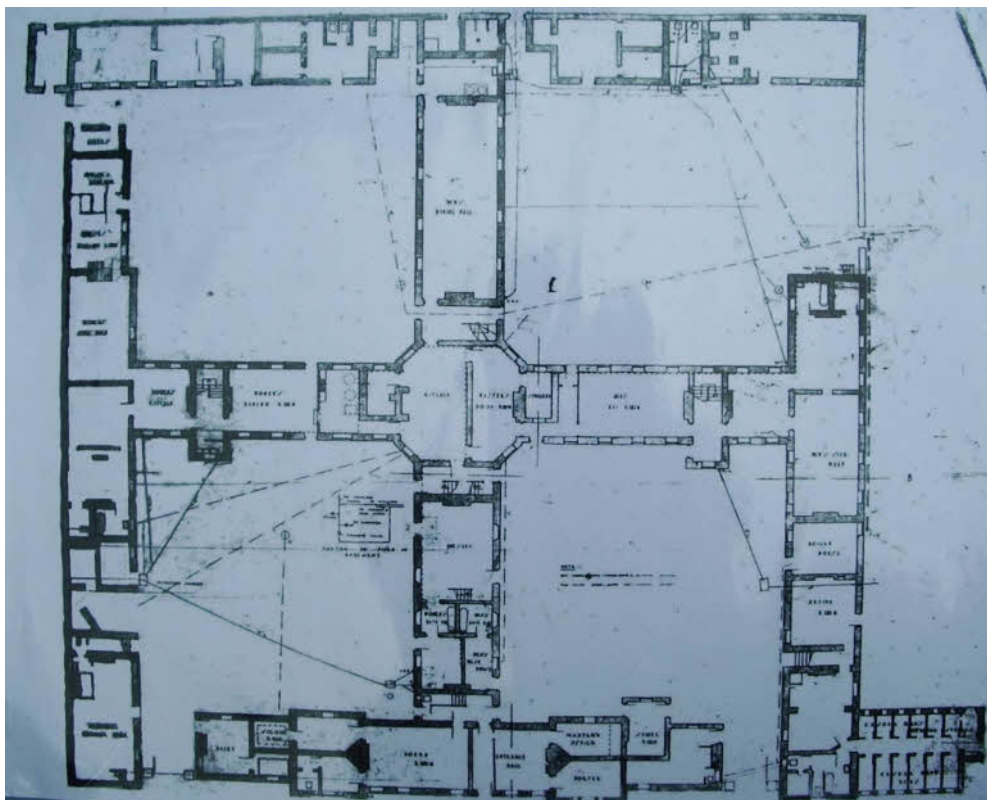
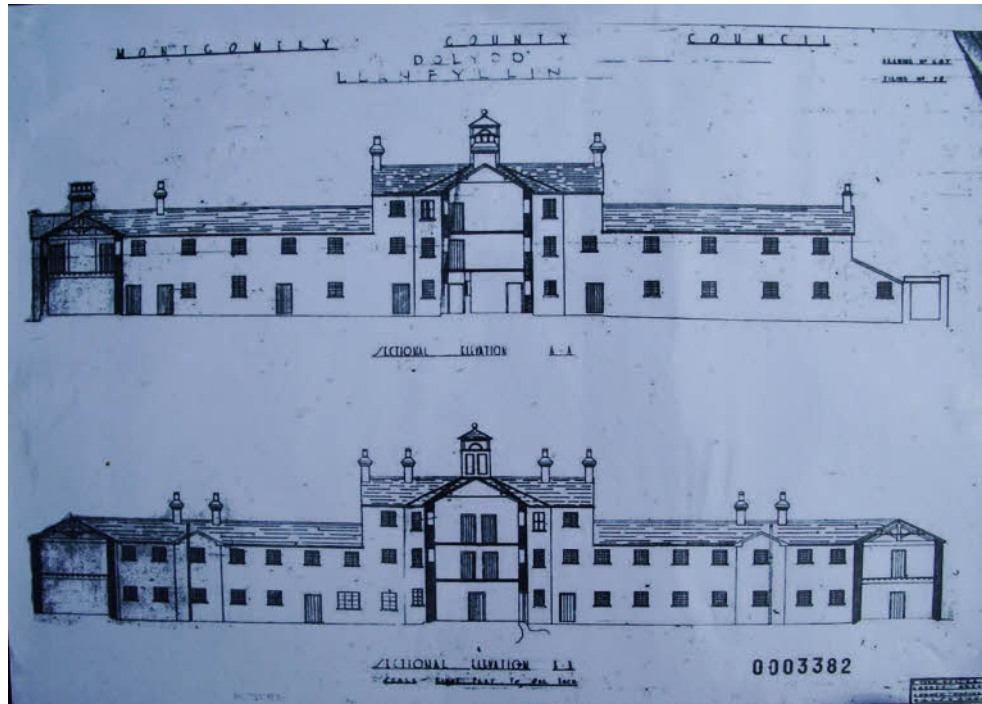
Secy to the Board of Guardians

The Poor Law Commission published specimen designs.
Thomas Penson adopted a similar layout.



Penson's original designs have not survived.

But little had changed when these drawings were made in the 1930s.



Penson's plans were sent to the Poor Law Commission for approval.

Their architect criticised some aspects of the designs and pointed out 'lurking places out of sight from the Master'.

420 P. Lanfyllin Union
Plans for a New Workhouse
to contain 200 Paupers -
Estimate £11081
Sewerage £170
Supply of Water 180
Warming £200 to 250 600
£4681

The projections for Water Closets in Main Building appear unnecessary and will be attended with the inconvenience of affording lurking Places out of sight from the Master -

The Surgery is inconveniently situated -
No Bath is provided to Receiving Rooms where it is absolutely necessary -

In other respects the general arrangement and Classification are good.

In July 1837 the Guardians advertised in the Chester Chronicle for tenders to build their new Workhouse.

Llanfyllin Union.

TO CONTRACTORS and BUILDERS.

The Board of Guardians of this Union will contract for building a NEW WORKHOUSE for the accommodation of 250 paupers, upon land near Llanfyllin, according to plans and specifications prepared by Mr. Penson, architect, and which have been approved of by the Poor Law Commissioners.

Copies of the working drawings and specifications will be prepared, and may be seen any time after the 7th instant, at my office, at Llanfyllin, at or at the office of Mr. Penson, in Oswestry, from whom further particulars may be known.

The Board of Guardians will meet at Llanfyllin, on Tuesday, the 1st of August next, at ten o'clock in the forenoon, to receive tenders for the work.

The contractor will be required to enter into a bond with sufficient sureties, for the due completion of the work, within a time to be fixed upon at such meeting.

The Guardians will not consider themselves bound to accept the lowest tender, without having due regard to the responsibility of the parties.

Should the persons desirous of contracting not attend at Llanfyllin on the 1st day of August, sealed tenders, indorsed "Tenders for building Llanfyllin Workhouse," must be sent to me, free of expence, on or before the 31st day of July.

H. LLOYD WILLIAMS,
Clerk to the Board of Guardians.

By the summer of 1838 work was in full swing.

Hugh Morris of Llanfair Talhaiarn, Denbighshire, was the main contractor.

John Beard of Willow St, Oswestry was making bricks on site for the inner walls.

Date	Description	Amount
1838		
July 10 th	221	
—	221	
—		
20 th		
30 th		
31 st		
Aug 8 th		
—		
14 th		
21 st		
29 th		
30 th		
Sept 4 th		
15 th		
—		
17 th		
	By	
	Paid Hugh Morris Contractor	52 7 7
	D ^o Hugh Morris	40 0 0
	John Beard	
	D ^o Hugh Morris	100 0 0
	D ^o Duty on Bricks	13 8 4
	M ^r Beard for making Bricks	20 0 0
	M ^r Penson balance of the	
	Timber Bill bought at Liverpool	39 16 0
	D ^o Hugh Morris	120 0 0
	D ^o Rowland Coang Jones	7 0 0
	M ^r Beard on account of Bricks	30 0 0
	Mess ^{rs} Fairhurst & Tilston	
	Carriage of Timber from Liverpool	47 15 0
	Robert Jones for going to	
	Garthmill for Brickmaking	5 0 0
	John Sedwick for carriage	
	of Timber from New Bridge	13 14 8
	M ^r Beard on account of Bricks	30 0 0
	Rowland Coang Jones	10 0 0
	D ^o Hugh Morris	100 0 0
	D ^o Duty on Bricks	12 10 10
	Balance	457 13 9

Thomas Penson arranged the purchase of timber through Liverpool docks.

Fairhurst and Tilston, carriers, transported the timber by river and canal.

The Building Accounts in Powys Archives show payments to many local craftsmen and suppliers.

Rowland Evans did most of the joinery.

Evan Pugh did all the slating.

	£	s.	d.
Balance from last quarter	31	9	1/4
Paid Mr. Howells Carpenter	10	2	0
Mr. Beard	10	0	0
Rowland Evans Carpenter	20	0	0
William Lewis Joiner	-	7	6
Hugh Morris	40	0	0
Mr. Penon for Timber	40	0	0
Mr. Penon on account of his extra Bill for Plans &c for the Workhouse	60	0	0
Evan Pugh on account of slating	5	0	0
Mr. Griffiths on account of Slates	10	0	0
Paid Brick Duty	19	1	6
Stamp Receipt	-	-	6
Paid Simon Rogers	20	0	0

John Griffiths supplied slates from the Rhiwarth Slate Quarry at Llangynog.

Simon Rogers supplied dressed stone, including window sills, from a quarry 12 miles away. (The rest of the stone was quarried locally.)

The cast iron window frames came from two foundries.

John Onions Junior had inherited his father's foundry in Broseley.

Gittins and Cartwright had the Eagle Foundry in Pride Hill, Shrewsbury.

7571 a Haniffellu Union House

Mr. Onions balance of acc't of Bro. Onions

Mr. Debb for masonry saws etc &c

Arch for window, due slab etc

Mr. Muck for five lbs & bricks

Mr. Atty's bal of account for masonry

Robert Evans for carpenters work

Buffet mason for sink

Mr. Edwards for lime stone steps etc

Mr. Allen for masonry

Mr. Jones wages

Robert Evans for brick layers work

Gittins & Cartwright for iron window

221

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Mr. Onions balance of acc't of Bro. Onions	20	11	10			
Mr. Debb for masonry saws etc &c	42	1	0			
Arch for window, due slab etc	14	8	2			
Mr. Muck for five lbs & bricks	50	0	0			
Mr. Atty's bal of account for masonry	30	-	-			
Robert Evans for carpenters work	40	-	-			
Buffet mason for sink	6	-	-			
Mr. Edwards for lime stone steps etc	20	-	-			
Mr. Allen for masonry	10	10	3			
Mr. Jones wages	50	-	-			
Robert Evans for brick layers work	25	-	-			
Gittins & Cartwright for iron window	79	10	-			

Floor tiles like those in the History Centre came from John Howell's Trefarclawdd brickworks at Trefonen.

By autumn 1840 the Guardians had paid for beds...

D^R Building Account.

Date.	Folio in Minute Book.	Folio of Corresponding Credit.	ITEMS.	
1840			To Balance from last quarter	4936 5 11½
Sept 29 th			M ^r Rich ^d Morris Glasier	20 0 0
Oct 6 th			" Jackson for making of beds and Botchers
			Paid Labourers	14 6 7½
			C. Dale Company	15 3 0
20 th			Rowland Evans	20 0 0
			Paid Labourers	14 7 1½
			Richard Mills	" 7 "
			John Jones	60 17 0
			Rowland Evans	20 0 0
Nov 3 rd			Rich ^d Feulke's Slans. & fraud	27 19 7
			John Jones for black Peets	8 6 4½
			John Lodwick	2 16 10
			Labourers' Account	14 19 11
			Rowland Evans Joiner	7 14 8
			M ^r Acap	9 18 0
			M ^r Griffith Clerk of the Works	13 10 0
			Stamp receipt for do	" 1 "
			M ^r W. Bennett for Boiler and Cooking apparatus	29 15 0

...and for kitchen equipment.

In November the Clerk reported: 'The House is filling fast'.

The cost of building the Workhouse had exceeded the estimate.


Penson justified this in part by explaining that the local stone was of poor quality. The dressed stone needed for details had to be transported 12 miles.

He had had to make extra payments to the contractor.

Llanfyllin Union.

Receipt in the Estimate has been as follows.

	£	s	d
<i>In consequence of the Stone from the adjacent Quarries which was intended to be used not proving of a sufficient quality for the work; owing to which the whole of the Quoins, Dressings Piers &c had to be carried a distance of 12 Miles, the cost of the same & Extra Labour with additional claims made by the Contractor amounted to the sum of £1030.3.3 above the Original Estimate.</i>	1030	3	3



Penson's extra payments to the contractor, Hugh Morris, were the subject of a court case brought by Morris, who claimed he had been underpaid.

Morris had worked for Penson on the Caersws workhouse and several bridges.

The case was reported in the Chester Chronicle.

The Guardians had to settle and paid Morris a further £260.

MONTGOMERYSHIRE AND DENBIGHSHIRE.—*Hugh Morris v. Llanfyllin Union*.—This was an action brought by the plaintiff, who is a stone mason at Llanfair-tal-hararn, in Denbighshire, against the defendants, the Guardians of the Llanfyllin Union, in the counties of Montgomery and Denbigh, and the action was brought to recover the balance due to plaintiff on several contracts entered into by him with the defendants, for building the Llanfyllin Union Workhouse. The plaintiff completed his contracts about Christmas last, and the work was measured and the accounts made up by Mr. Penson, the architect to the Guardians' by which it appeared that nothing was due to plaintiff. The plaintiff however being dissatisfied, knowing a considerable sum was due to him, applied frequently to Mr. Penson and the Guardians to have the accounts re-examined; the former however treated plaintiff with neglect and contempt, . . .



An unknown artist drew the Workhouse during the 19th Century.



Many windows were altered in the 20th Century. But the Workhouse remains remarkably unchanged.

