Historic Wales Report

Dataset **Cadw Listed Buildings**
Title Ruthin Library
Type Listed Building
Dataset UID 902
Community Ruthin

Location
Set back slightly from the road, towards the E end of Record Street.

Date Listed 10/24/1950
Last Amendment 7/12/2006
Grade II*

History
County hall and record office by Joseph Turner, architect of Chester, 1785-90. It contained sprung floors, slate ceilings and shelving, for the preservation of the records of the Courts of Great Sessions. The front portico was added in 1866 replacing an earlier porch. A major restoration was undertaken in the late C20 when the building was converted to a library, and a gallery was inserted to the main range. A large block was added to the rear, probably at the same time.

Reason for Listing
Listed grade II* as a fine monumental Civic building by a prominent regional architect, retaining consistent Neo-classical character.

History
Hubbard, Edward, Buildings of Wales series: Clwyd, 1986, pp 276-7;
Information from Phillip Ebbrell, Head of Conservation, Denbighshire County Council.

Interior
The interior is T-shaped with a screen of 4 Tuscan columns at the junction of the main range and the rear cross-wing. Detail includes dentilled ceiling cornice, panelled doors, wide hollow-moulded rere arches to window bays. Lobby inside front entrance with moulded coving and panelled window shutters. Main range has 2 original foliate ceiling roses. Late C20 gallery, reached by straight stair in rectangular panelled stairwell, supported by 3 pairs of Tuscan columns. Gallery has bowed front overlooking cross-wing. Between main range and cross-wing is an original full-height arcade of 4 Tuscan columns supporting a cornice with triglyph frieze. The cross-wing contains a reading room with canted angles: Venetian window to W end, 2 blind windows to S wall, double panelled doors to E, leading to later blocks. The ceiling has a large skylight with painted Anthemion design and 4 moulded ceiling roses containing metal grilles. The wings are said to contain spiral staircases.

Exterior
Single-storey T-shaped hall with monumental front. Tetrastyle Roman Doric portico of fine sandstone ashlar, consisting of 4 columns, the central space wider, an entablature with triglyph frieze and dentilled triangular pediment. High plinth

with 6 steps to centre leading up to entrance. Front of main range also of sandstone ashlar: to centre, large recessed round-arched entrance; impost band; parapets on moulded string course flanking portico. Within recessed arch, a rectangular doorway with double panelled doors, under an inscribed slate tympanum: The Magistrates of this County, at the expense of the inhabitants, for the convenience of the courts of law, and safety of the public records, erected these in the years of Christ MDCCLXXXV-VII, Architect, Joseph Turner'. Above the inscription is a shield bearing a lion and festoons. An iron globe lamp is fixed on a bracket above the door. Aligned with the front elevation, but slightly set back, are lower flanking walls of coursed dressed sandstone with flat copings; to the centre of each wall is a slightly-advanced archway with raised segmental pediment, containing round-arched doorways of pointed-ended stone voussoirs with boarded doors.

The sides and wings are of coursed grey stone under slate roofs, hipped to rear end. Moulded eaves cornice, yellow sandstone dressings to openings, most of the windows small-pane sashes. The E side has 12-pane sash to far R, L of which the eaves are higher; inset C20 panelled door towards centre, large Venetian window in heavily moulded surround to L. Immediately to L, gabled wing at right angles with stone end stack. Its front is 2-storey 1-window with 12-pane sash under a 2-light casement with quarries; C20 panelled door to E end. Against rear of wing and extending E over a through-passage, is a later block of snecked stone under a hipped roof; it has lean-tos and small windows to N and a large tripartite sash under a segmental head of stone voussoirs to S. The through-passage has a cambered stone head.

West side of main range as E, but W wing has a moulded triangular pediment to gable apex, and no openings beneath. To its rear, a large block, probably original, of coursed rubble stone on a plinth under a hipped roof, with large Venetian window to W end. Its rear (S) side has a small window to L, and a further hipped-roofed lean-to with sash and door. Adjoining rear of main range is a large late C20 block with casement windows above garages.